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GIBBON'S
HISTORY
OF THE
DECLINE AND FALL
OF
THE ROMAN EMPIRE:

FOR THE USE OF
Families and Young Persons.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

GIBBON'S
HISTORY
OF THE
DECLINE AND FALL
OF
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FOR THE USE OF
Families and Young Persons.

REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXT,
WITH THE CAREFUL OMISSION OF ALL PASSAGES OF AN
IRRELIGIOUS OR IMMORAL TENDENCY.

By THOMAS BOWDLER, Esq. F.R.S. S.A.

EDITOR OF THE FAMILY SHAKSPEARE.

O Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
O, throw away the worse part of it;
And live the purer with the other half.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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1826.

346.

Ubi animus requievit, et mihi reliquam ætatem a Republica
procul habendam decrevi, non fuit consilium socordia
atque desidia bonum otium conterere.



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THE
HISTORY
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CHAPTER XXIV.

*Revolt of the Goths.—They plunder Greece.—Two great
Invasions of Italy by Alaric and Radagaisus.—They are
repulsed by Stilicho.—The Germans overrun Gaul.—
Usurpation of Constantine in the West.—Disgrace and
Death of Stilicho.*

IF the subjects of Rome could be ignorant of their obligations to the great Theodosius, they were too soon convinced how painfully the spirit and abilities of their deceased emperor had supported the frail and mouldering edifice of the republic. He died in the month of January; and before the end of the winter of the same year, the Gothic nation was in arms*. The Barbarian auxiliaries erected their independent standard; and boldly avowed the hostile designs which they had long cherished in their ferocious minds. Their countrymen, who had been condemned, by the conditions of the last treaty, to a life of tranquillity and labour, deserted their farms at the first sound of

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Revolt of
the Goths,
A. D. 395.

* The revolt of the Goths, and the blockade of Constantinople, are distinctly mentioned by Claudian (in Rufin. l. ii. 7—100.), Zosimus (l. v. p. 292.), and Jornandes (de Rebus Geticis, c. 29.).

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the trumpet ; and eagerly resumed the weapons which they had reluctantly laid down. The barriers of the Danube were thrown open ; the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests ; and the uncommon severity of the winter allowed the poet to remark, “ that they rolled their ponderous waggons over the “ broad and icy back of the indignant river.” The unhappy natives of the provinces to the south of the Danube submitted to the calamities which, in the course of twenty years, were almost grown familiar to their imagination ; and the various troops of Barbarians, who gloried in the Gothic name, were irregularly spread from the woody shores of Dalmatia to the walls of Constantinople. The interruption, or at least the diminution, of the subsidy which the Goths had received from the prudent liberality of Theodosius, was the specious pretence of their revolt : the affront was embittered by their contempt for the unwarlike sons of Theodosius ; and their resentment was inflamed by the weakness, or treachery, of the minister of Arcadius. The frequent visits of Rufinus to the camp of the Barbarians, whose arms and apparel he affected to imitate, were considered as a sufficient evidence of his guilty correspondence : and the public enemy, from a motive either of gratitude or of policy, was attentive, amidst the general devastation, to spare the private estates of the unpopular præfect. The Goths, instead of being impelled by the blind and headstrong passions of their chiefs, were now directed by the bold and artful genius of Alaric. That renowned leader was descended from the noble race of the Balti ; which yielded only to the royal dignity of the Amali : he had solicited the command of the Roman armies ; and the Imperial court provoked him to demonstrate the folly of their refusal, and the importance of their loss. Whatever hopes might be entertained of the conquest of Constantinople, the

judicious general soon abandoned an impracticable enterprise. In the midst of a divided court, and a discontented people, the emperor Arcadius was terrified by the aspect of the Gothic arms : but the want of wisdom and valour was supplied by the strength of the city ; and the fortifications, both of the sea and land, might securely brave the impotent and random darts of the Barbarians. Alaric disdained to trample any longer on the prostrate and ruined countries of Thrace and Dacia, and he resolved to seek a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in a province which had hitherto escaped the ravages of war*.

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The character of the civil and military officers, on whom Rufinus had devolved the government of Greece, confirmed the public suspicion, that he had betrayed the ancient seat of freedom and learning to the Gothic invader. The proconsul Antiochus was the unworthy son of a respectable father ; and Gerontius, who commanded the provincial troops, was much better qualified to execute the oppressive orders of a tyrant than to defend, with courage and ability, a country most remarkably fortified by the hand of nature. Alaric had traversed, without resistance, the plains of Macedonia and Thessaly, as far as the foot of Mount Oeta, a steep and woody range of hills, almost impervious to his cavalry. They stretched from east to west, to the edge of the sea-shore ; and left between the precipice and the Malian Gulf an interval of three hundred feet, which, in some places, was contracted to a road capable of admitting only a single carriage. In this narrow pass of Thermopylæ, where Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans had gloriously devoted their lives, the Goths might have been stopped, or destroyed, by a skilful general ; and perhaps the view of that sacred spot might have

Alaric
marches
into Greece,
A. D. 396.

* Zosimus (L. v. p. 293—295.) is our best guide for the conquest of Greece : but the hints and allusion of Claudian are so many rays of historic light.

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kindled some sparks of military ardour in the breasts of the degenerate Greeks. The troops which had been posted to defend the straits of Thermopylæ retired, as they were directed, without attempting to disturb the secure and rapid passage of Alaric ; and the fertile fields of Phocis and Bæotia were instantly covered by a deluge of Barbarians, who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages. The travellers, who visited Greece several years afterwards, could easily discover the deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths ; and Thebes was less indebted for her preservation to the strength of her seven gates, than to the eager haste of Alaric, who advanced to occupy the city of Athens, and the important harbour of the Piræus. The same impatience urged him to prevent the delay and danger of a siege, by the offer of a capitulation ; and as soon as the Athenians heard the voice of the Gothic herald, they were easily persuaded to deliver the greatest part of their wealth, as the ransom of the city of Minerva and its inhabitants. The treaty was ratified by solemn oaths, and observed with mutual fidelity. The Gothic prince, with a small and select train, was admitted within the walls ; he indulged himself in the refreshment of the bath, accepted a splendid banquet which was provided by the magistrate, and affected to show that he was not ignorant of the manners of civilized nations. But the whole territory of Attica, from the promontory of Sunium to the town of Megara, was blasted by his baleful presence ; and, if we may use the comparison of a contemporary philosopher, Athens itself resembled the bleeding and empty skin of a slaughtered victim. The distance between Megara and Corinth could not much exceed thirty miles ; but the *bad road*, an expressive name, which it still bears among the Greeks,

was, or might easily have been made, impassable for the march of an enemy. The thick and gloomy woods of Mount Cithæron covered the inland country; the Scironian rocks approached the water's edge, and hung over the narrow and winding path, which was confined above six miles along the sea-shore. The passage of those rocks, so infamous in every age, was terminated by the isthmus of Corinth; and a small body of firm and intrepid soldiers might have successfully defended a temporary intrenchment of five or six miles from the Ionian to the Ægean sea. The confidence of the cities of Peloponnesus in their natural rampart had tempted them to neglect the care of their antique walls; and the avarice of the Roman governors had exhausted and betrayed the unhappy province. Corinth, Argos, Sparta, yielded without resistance to the arms of the Goths; and the most fortunate of the inhabitants were saved, by death, from beholding the slavery of their families, and the conflagration of their cities. The vases and statues were distributed among the Barbarians, with more regard to the value of the materials than to the elegance of the workmanship; the female captives submitted to the laws of war; the enjoyment of beauty was the reward of valour; and the Greeks could not reasonably complain of an abuse which was justified by the example of the heroic times. The descendants of that extraordinary people, who had considered valour and discipline as the walls of Sparta, no longer remembered the generous reply of their ancestors to an invader more formidable than Alaric. "If thou art a god, thou wilt not hurt those who have never injured thee; if thou art a man, advance:—and thou wilt find men equal to thyself." From Thermopylæ to Sparta, the leader of the Goths pursued his victorious march without encountering any mortal antagonists: but one of the advocates of

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expiring Paganism has confidently asserted, that the walls of Athens were guarded by the goddess Minerva, with her formidable Ægis, and by the angry phantom of Achilles; and that the conqueror was dismayed by the presence of the hostile deities of Greece. In an age of miracles, it would perhaps be unjust to dispute the claim of the historian Zosimus to the common benefit; yet it cannot be dissembled, that the mind of Alaric was ill prepared to receive, either in sleeping or waking visions, the impressions of Greek superstition. The songs of Homer, and the fame of Achilles, had probably never reached the ear of the illiterate *Barbarian*; and the *Christian* faith, which he had devoutly embraced, taught him to despise the imaginary deities of Rome and Athens. The invasion of the Goths, instead of vindicating the honour, contributed, at least accidentally, to extirpate the last remains of Paganism; and the mysteries of Ceres, which had subsisted eighteen hundred years, did not survive the destruction of Eleusis, and the calamities of Greece.

He is at-
tacked by
Stilicho,
A. D. 397.

The last hope of a people who could no longer depend on their arms, their gods, or their sovereign, was placed in the powerful assistance of the general of the West; and Stilicho, who had not been permitted to repulse, advanced to chastise, the invaders of Greece. A numerous fleet was equipped in the ports of Italy; and the troops, after a short and prosperous navigation over the Ionian sea, were safely disembarked on the isthmus, near the ruins of Corinth. The woody and mountainous country of Arcadia, the fabulous residence of Pan and the Dryads, became the scene of a long and doubtful conflict between two generals not unworthy of each other. The skill and perseverance of the Roman at length prevailed; and the Goths, after sustaining a considerable loss from disease and desertion, gradually re-

treated to the lofty mountain of Pholoe, near the sources of the Peneus, and on the frontiers of Elis ; a sacred country, which had formerly been exempted from the calamities of war. The camp of the Barbarians was immediately besieged : the waters of the river were diverted into another channel ; and while they laboured under the intolerable pressure of thirst and hunger, a strong line of circumvallation was formed to prevent their escape. After these precautions, Stilicho, too confident of victory, retired to enjoy his triumph, in the theatrical games, and lascivious dances of the Greeks ; his soldiers, deserting their standards, spread themselves over the country of their allies, which they stripped of all that had been saved from the rapacious hands of the enemy. Alaric appears to have seized the favourable moment to execute one of those hardy enterprises, in which the abilities of a general are displayed with more genuine lustre than in the tumult of a day of battle. To extricate himself from the prison of Peloponnesus, it was necessary that he should pierce the intrenchments which surrounded his camp ; that he should perform a difficult and dangerous march of thirty miles, as far as the Gulf of Corinth ; and that he should transport his troops, his captives, and his spoil, over an arm of the sea, which, in the narrow interval between Rhium and the opposite shore, is at least half a mile in breadth. The operations of Alaric must have been secret, prudent, and rapid ; since the Roman general was confounded by the intelligence that the Goths, who had eluded his efforts, were in full possession of the important province of Epirus. This unfortunate delay allowed Alaric sufficient time to conclude the treaty, which he secretly negotiated, with the ministers of Constantinople. The apprehension of a civil war compelled Stilicho to retire, at the haughty mandate of

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Escapes to
Epirus.

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his rivals, from the dominions of Arcadius ; and he respected, in the enemy of Rome, the honourable character of the ally and servant of the emperor of the East.

Alaric is
declared
master ge-
neral of the
Eastern
Illyricum,
A. D. 398,

A Grecian philosopher, who visited Constantinople soon after the death of Theodosius, published his liberal opinions concerning the duties of kings, and the state of the Roman republic. Synesius observes, and deplores, the fatal abuse, which the imprudent bounty of the late emperor had introduced into the military service. The citizens, and subjects, had purchased an exemption from the indispensable duty of defending their country ; which was supported by the arms of Barbarian mercenaries. The fugitives of Scythia were permitted to disgrace the illustrious dignities of the empire ; their ferocious youth, who disdained the salutary restraint of laws, were more anxious to acquire the riches, than to imitate the arts, of a people, the object of their contempt and hatred ; and the power of the Goths was the stone of Tantalus, perpetually suspended over the peace and safety of the devoted state. The measures, which Synesius recommends, are the dictates of a bold and generous patriot. He exhorts the emperor to revive the courage of his subjects, by the example of manly virtue ; to banish luxury from the court, and from the camp ; to substitute, in the place of the Barbarian mercenaries, an army of men, interested in the defence of their laws and of their property ; to force, in such a moment of public danger, the mechanic from his shop, and the philosopher from his school ; to rouse the indolent citizen from his dream of pleasure, and to arm, for the protection of agriculture, the hands of the laborious husbandman. At the head of such troops, who might deserve the name, and would display the spirit, of Romans, he animates the son of Theodosius to encounter a race of Bar-

barians, who were destitute of any real courage; and never to lay down his arms, till he had chased them far away into the solitudes of Scythia; or had reduced them to the state of ignominious servitude, which the Lacedæmonians formerly imposed on the captive Helots*. The court of Arcadius indulged the zeal, applauded the eloquence, and neglected the advice, of Synesius. Perhaps the philosopher, who addresses the emperor of the East, in the language of reason and virtue, which he might have used to a Spartan king, had not condescended to form a practicable scheme, consistent with the temper and circumstances of a degenerate age. Perhaps the pride of the ministers, whose business was seldom interrupted by reflection, might reject, as wild and visionary, every proposal which exceeded the measure of their capacity, and deviated from the forms and precedents of office. While the oration of Synesius, and the downfall of the Barbarians, were the topics of popular conversation, an edict was published at Constantinople, which declared the promotion of Alaric to the rank of master-general of the Eastern Illyricum. The Roman provincials, and the allies, who had respected the faith of treaties, were justly indignant, that the ruin of Greece and Epirus should be so liberally rewarded. The Gothic conqueror was received as a lawful magistrate, in the cities which he had so lately besieged. The fathers, whose sons he had massacred, the husbands, whose wives he had violated, were subject to his authority: and the success of his rebellion encouraged the ambition of every leader of the foreign mercenaries. The use to which Alaric applied his new command distinguishes the firm and judicious character of his policy. He issued his orders to the four magazines and manufactures of

* Synesius de Regno, p. 21—26.

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offensive and defensive arms, Margus, Ratiaria, Na-
 issus, and Thessalonica, to provide his troops with an
 extraordinary supply of shields, helmets, swords, and
 spears ; the unhappy provincials were compelled to
 forge the instruments of their own destruction ; and
 the Barbarians removed the only defect which had
 sometimes disappointed the efforts of their courage.
 The birth of Alaric, the glory of his past exploits,
 and the confidence in his future designs, insensibly
 united the body of the nation under his victorious
 standard ; and with the unanimous consent of the
 Barbarian chieftains, the master-general of Illyricum
 was elevated, according to ancient custom, on a shield,
 and solemnly proclaimed king of the Visigoths. Armed
 with this double power, seated on the verge of the
 two empires, he alternately sold his deceitful promises
 to the courts of Arcadius and Honorius, till he de-
 clared and executed his resolution of invading the
 dominions of the West. The provinces of Europe
 which belonged to the Eastern emperor were already
 exhausted ; those of Asia were inaccessible ; and the
 strength of Constantinople had resisted his attack.
 But he was tempted by the fame, the beauty, the
 wealth of Italy, which he had twice visited ; and he
 secretly aspired to plant the Gothic standard on the
 walls of Rome, and to enrich his army with the ac-
 cumulated spoils of three hundred triumphs.

and king of
 the Visi-
 goths.

He invades
 Italy,
 A. D.
 400—403.

The scarcity of facts, and the uncertainty of dates,
 oppose our attempts to describe the circumstances of
 the first invasion of Italy by the arms of Alaric. His
 march, perhaps from Thessalonica, through the war-
 like and hostile country of Pannonia, as far as the
 foot of the Julian Alps ; his passage of those moun-
 tains, which were strongly guarded by troops and
 intrenchments ; the siege of Aquileia, and the con-
 quest of the provinces of Istria and Venetia, appear
 to have employed a considerable time. Unless his

operations were extremely cautious and slow, the length of the interval would suggest a probable suspicion that the Gothic king retreated towards the banks of the Danube; and reinforced his army with fresh swarms of Barbarians, before he again attempted to penetrate into the heart of Italy. Since the public and important events escape the diligence of the historian, he may amuse himself with contemplating, for a moment, the influence of the arms of Alaric on the fortunes of a husbandman of Verona. The *old man*, who had passed his simple and innocent life in the neighbourhood of Verona, was a stranger to quarrels; *his* pleasures, his desires, his knowledge, were confined within the little circle of his paternal farm; and a staff supported his aged steps on the same ground where he had sported in his infancy. Yet even this humble and rustic felicity (which Claudian describes with so much truth and feeling) was still exposed to the undistinguishing rage of war. His trees, his old *contemporary trees**, must blaze in the conflagration of the whole country; a detachment of Gothic cavalry might sweep away his cottage and his family; and the power of Alaric could destroy this happiness, which he was not able either to taste or to bestow. “Fame,” says the poet, “encircling with terror or gloomy wings, proclaimed the march of the Barbarian army, and filled Italy with consternation:” the apprehensions of each individual were increased in just proportion to the measure of his fortune: and the most timid, who had already embarked their valuable effects, medi-

* *Ingentem meminit parvo qui germine quercum
Æquævumque videt consenuisse nemus.*

A neighbouring wood born with himself he sees,
And loves his old contemporary trees.

In this passage, Cowley is perhaps superior to his original; and the English poet, who was a good botanist, has concealed the *oaks* under a more general expression.

CHAP. tated their escape to the island of Sicily, or the
XXIV. African coast.

Honorius
flies from
Milan,
A. D. 403.

The emperor Honorius was distinguished above his subjects by the pre-eminence of fear as well as of rank. The pride and luxury in which he was educated had not allowed him to suspect that there existed on the earth any power presumptuous enough to invade the repose of the successor of Augustus. The arts of flattery concealed the impending danger, till Alaric approached the palace of Milan. But when the sound of war had awakened the young emperor, instead of flying to arms with the spirit, or even the rashness, of his age, he eagerly listened to those timid counsellors, who proposed to convey his sacred person, and his faithful attendants, to some secure and distant station in the provinces of Gaul. Stilicho alone had courage and authority to resist this disgraceful measure, which would have abandoned Rome and Italy to the Barbarians; but as the troops of the palace had been lately detached to the Rhætian frontier, and as the resource of new levies was slow and precarious, the general of the West could only promise, that if the court of Milan would maintain their ground during his absence, he would soon return with an army equal to the encounter of the Gothic king. Without losing a moment (while each moment was so important to the public safety), Stilicho hastily embarked on the Larian Lake, ascended the mountains of ice and snow, amidst the severity of an Alpine winter, and suddenly repressed, by his unexpected presence, the enemy who had disturbed the tranquillity of Rhætia*. The Barbarians, perhaps some tribes of the Alemanni, respected the firmness of a chief who still assumed the language of command; and the choice which he condescended to

* The face of the country, and the hardiness of Stilicho, are finely described (de Bell. Get. 340—363).

make, of a select number of their bravest youth, was considered as a mark of his esteem and favour. The cohorts, who were delivered from the neighbouring foe, diligently repaired to the Imperial standard; and Stilicho issued his orders to the most remote troops of the West, to advance, by rapid marches, to the defence of Honorius and of Italy. The fortresses of the Rhine were abandoned; and the safety of Gaul was protected only by the faith of the Germans, and the ancient terror of the Roman name. Even the legion, which had been stationed to guard the wall of Britain against the Caledonians of the North, was hastily recalled*; and a numerous body of the cavalry of the Alani was persuaded to engage in the service of the emperor, who anxiously expected the return of his general. The prudence and vigour of Stilicho were conspicuous on this occasion, which revealed at the same time the weakness of the falling empire. The legions of Rome, which had long since languished in the gradual decay of discipline and courage, were exterminated by the Gothic and civil wars; and it was found impossible, without exhausting and exposing the provinces, to assemble an army for the defence of Italy.

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When Stilicho seemed to abandon his sovereign in the unguarded palace of Milan, he had probably calculated the term of his absence, the distance of the enemy, and the obstacles that might retard their march. He principally depended on the rivers of Italy, the Adige, the Mincius, the Oglio, and the Addua; which, in the winter or spring, by the fall of rains, or by the melting of the snows, are commonly swelled into broad and impetuous torrents.

He is pursued and besieged by the Goths.

* Venit et extremis legio prætenta Britannis
Quæ Scoto dat frena truci.

De Bell. Get. 416.

Yet the most rapid march from Edinburgh, or Newcastle, to Milan, must have required a longer space of time than Claudian seems willing to allow for the duration of the Gothic war.

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But the season happened to be remarkably dry ; and the Goths could traverse, without impediment, the wide and stony beds, whose centre was faintly marked by the course of a shallow stream. The bridge and passage of the Addua were secured by a strong detachment of the Gothic army ; and as Alaric approached the walls, or rather the suburbs, of Milan, he enjoyed the proud satisfaction of seeing the emperor of the Romans fly before him. Honorius, accompanied by a feeble train of statesmen and eunuchs, hastily retreated towards the Alps, with a design of securing his person in the city of Arles, which had often been the royal residence of his predecessors. But Honorius had scarcely passed the Po, before he was overtaken by the speed of the Gothic cavalry ; since the urgency of the danger compelled him to seek a temporary shelter within the fortification of Asta, a town of Liguria or Piemont, situate on the banks of the Tanarus. The siege of an obscure place, which contained so rich a prize, and seemed incapable of a long resistance, was instantly formed, and indefatigably pressed, by the king of the Goths ; and the bold declaration, which the emperor might afterwards make, that his breast had never been susceptible of fear, did not probably obtain much credit, even in his own court. In the last, and almost hopeless extremity, after the Barbarians had already proposed the indignity of a capitulation, the Imperial captive was suddenly relieved by the fame, the approach, and at length the presence of the hero, whom he had so long expected. At the head of a chosen and intrepid vanguard, Stilicho swam the stream of the Addua, to gain the time which he must have lost in the attack of the bridge ; the passage of the Po was an enterprise of much less hazard and difficulty ; and the successful action, in which he cut his way through the Gothic

camp under the walls of Asta, revived the hopes, and vindicated the honour, of Rome. Instead of grasping the fruit of his victory, the Barbarian was gradually invested on every side by the troops of the West, who successively issued through all the passes of the Alps; his quarters were straitened; his convoys were intercepted; and the vigilance of the Romans prepared to form a chain of fortifications, and to besiege the lines of the besiegers. A military council was assembled of the long-haired chiefs of the Gothic nation; of aged warriors, whose bodies were wrapped in furs, and whose stern countenances were marked with honourable wounds. They weighed the glory of persisting in their attempt against the advantage of securing their plunder; and they recommended the prudent measure of a seasonable retreat. In this important debate, Alaric displayed the spirit of the conqueror of Rome; and after he had reminded his countrymen of their achievements and of their designs, he concluded his animating speech by the solemn and positive assurance, that he was resolved to find in Italy either a kingdom or a grave*.

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The loose discipline of the Barbarians always exposed them to the danger of a surprise; but, instead of choosing the dissolute hours of riot and intemperance, Stilicho resolved to attack the *Christian* Goths, whilst they were devoutly employed in celebrating the festival of Easter. The execution of the stratagem was intrusted to Saul, a Barbarian and a Pagan, who had served, however, with distinguished reputation among the veteran generals of Theodosius. The camp of the Goths, which Alaric had pitched in the neighbourhood of Pollentia, was thrown into con-

Battle of
Pollentia,
A. D. 403,
March 29.

* Hanc ego vel victor regno, vel morte tenebo
Victus, humum —

The speeches (de Bell. Get. 479—549.) of the Gothic Nestor, and Achilles, are strong, characteristic, adapted to the circumstances; and possibly not less genuine than those of Livy.

fusion by the sudden and impetuous charge of the Imperial cavalry ; but, in a few moments, the undaunted genius of their leader gave them an order, and a field of battle. In this engagement, which was long maintained with equal courage and success, the chief of the Alani, whose diminutive and savage form concealed a magnanimous soul, approved his suspected loyalty by the zeal with which he fought, and fell, in the service of the republic ; and the fame of this gallant Barbarian has been imperfectly preserved in the verses of Claudian, since the poet who celebrates his virtue has omitted the mention of his name. His death was followed by the flight and dismay of the squadrons which he commanded ; and the defeat of the wing of cavalry might have decided the victory of Alaric, if Stilicho had not immediately led the Roman and Barbarian infantry to the attack. The skill of the general, and the bravery of the soldiers, surmounted every obstacle. In the evening of the bloody day the Goths retreated from the field of battle ; the intrenchments of their camp were forced, and the scene of rapine and slaughter made some atonement for the calamities which they had inflicted on the subjects of the empire. The magnificent spoils of Corinth and Argos enriched the veterans of the West ; the captive wife of Alaric, who had impatiently claimed his promise of Roman jewels and Patrician handmaids, was reduced to implore the mercy of the insulting foe ; and many thousand prisoners, released from the Gothic chains, dispersed through the provinces of Italy the praises of their heroic deliverer. The triumph of Stilicho was compared by the poet, and perhaps by the public, to that of Marius, who, in the same part of Italy, had encountered and destroyed another army of northern Barbarians. The huge bones, and the empty helmets, of the Cimbri and of the Goths, would easily be

confounded by succeeding generations ; and posterity might erect a common trophy to the memory of the two most illustrious generals, who had vanquished, on the same memorable ground, the two most formidable enemies of Rome.

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The eloquence of Claudian has celebrated, with lavish applause, the victory of Pollentia, one of the most glorious days in the life of his patron ; but his reluctant and partial muse bestows more genuine praise on the character of the Gothic king. His name is indeed branded with the reproachful epithets of pirate and robber, to which the conquerors of every age are so justly entitled ; but the poet of Stilicho is compelled to acknowledge, that Alaric possessed the invincible temper of mind which rises superior to every misfortune, and derives new resources from adversity. After the total defeat of his infantry, he escaped, or rather withdrew, from the field of battle, with the greatest part of his cavalry entire and unbroken. Without wasting a moment to lament the irreparable loss of so many brave companions, he left his victorious enemy to bind in chains the captive images of a Gothic king ; and boldly resolved to break through the unguarded passes of the Apennine, to spread desolation over the fruitful face of Tuscany, and to conquer or die before the gates of Rome. The capital was saved by the active and incessant diligence of Stilicho : but he respected the despair of his enemy ; and, instead of committing the fate of the republic to the chance of another battle, he proposed to purchase the absence of the Barbarians. The spirit of Alaric would have rejected such terms, the permission of a retreat, and the offer of a pension, with contempt and indignation ; but he exercised a limited and precarious authority over the independent chieftains, who had raised him, for *their* service, above the rank of his equals ; they were still less disposed to

Boldness
and retreat
of Alaric.

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follow an unsuccessful general, and many of them were tempted to consult their interest by a private negotiation with the minister of Honorius. The king submitted to the voice of his people, ratified the treaty with the empire of the West, and repassed the Po, with the remains of the flourishing army which he had led into Italy. A considerable part of the Roman forces still continued to attend his motions; and Stilicho, who maintained a secret correspondence with some of the Barbarian chiefs, was punctually apprised of the designs that were formed in the camp and council of Alaric. The king of the Goths, ambitious to signalize his retreat by some splendid achievement, had resolved to occupy the important city of Verona, which commands the principal passage of the Rætian Alps; and, directing his march through the territories of those German tribes, whose alliance would restore his exhausted strength, to invade, on the side of the Rhine, the wealthy and unsuspecting provinces of Gaul. Ignorant of the treason, which had already betrayed his bold and judicious enterprise, he advanced towards the passes of the mountains, already possessed by the Imperial troops, where he was exposed, almost at the same instant, to a general attack in the front, on his flanks, and in the rear. In this bloody action, at a small distance from the walls of Verona, the loss of the Goths was not less heavy than that which they had sustained in the defeat of Pollentia; and their valiant king, who escaped by the swiftness of his horse, must either have been slain or made prisoner, if the hasty rashness of the Alani had not disappointed the measures of the Roman general. Alaric secured the remains of his army on the adjacent rocks, and prepared himself, with undaunted resolution, to maintain a siege against the superior numbers of the enemy, who invested him on all sides. But he could not

oppose the destructive progress of hunger and disease; nor was it possible for him to check the continual desertion of his impatient and capricious Barbarians. In this extremity he still found resources in his own courage, or in the moderation of his adversary; and the retreat of the Gothic king was considered as the deliverance of Italy. Yet the people and the clergy, incapable of forming any rational judgment of the business of peace and war, presumed to arraign the policy of Stilicho, who so often vanquished, so often surrounded, and so often dismissed the implacable enemy of the republic. The first moment of the public safety is devoted to gratitude and joy; but the second is diligently occupied by envy and calumny.

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The citizens of Rome had been astonished by the approach of Alaric; and the diligence with which they laboured to restore the walls of the capital confessed their own fears, and the decline of the empire. After the retreat of the Barbarians, Honorius was directed to accept the dutiful invitation of the senate, and to celebrate, in the Imperial city, the auspicious æra of the Gothic victory, and of his sixth consulship. The suburbs and the streets, from the Milvian bridge to the Palatine mount, were filled by the Roman people, who, in the space of a hundred years, had only thrice been honoured with the presence of their sovereigns. While their eyes were fixed on the chariot where Stilicho was deservedly seated by the side of his royal pupil, they applauded the pomp of a triumph which was not stained, like that of Constantine, or of Theodosius, with civil blood. The procession passed under a lofty arch, which had been purposely erected: but in less than seven years, the Gothic conquerors of Rome might read, if they were able to read, the superb inscription of that monument which attested the total defeat and destruction of their nation. The emperor resided several months

The triumph of
Honorius,
at Rome,
A. D. 404.

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in the capital, and every part of his behaviour was regulated with care to conciliate the affection of the clergy, the senate, and the people of Rome. The clergy was edified by his frequent visits, and liberal gifts, to the shrines of the apostles. The senate, who, in the triumphal procession, had been excused from the humiliating ceremony of preceding on foot the Imperial chariot, was treated with the decent reverence which Stilicho always affected for that assembly. The people was repeatedly gratified by the attention and courtesy of Honorius in the public games, which were celebrated on that occasion with a magnificence not unworthy of the spectator. As soon as the appointed number of chariot-races was concluded, the decoration of the Circus was suddenly changed; the hunting of wild beasts afforded a various and splendid entertainment; and the chase was succeeded by a military dance, which seems, in the lively description of Claudian, to present the image of a modern tournament.

The gladiators
abolished.

In these games of Honorius, the inhuman combats of gladiators polluted, for the last time, the amphitheatre of Rome. The first Christian emperor may claim the honour of the first edict which condemned the art and amusement of shedding human blood; but this benevolent law expressed the wishes of the prince, without reforming an inveterate abuse, which degraded a civilized nation below the condition of savage cannibals. Several hundred, perhaps several thousand, victims were annually slaughtered in the great cities of the empire; and the month of December, more peculiarly devoted to the combats of gladiators, still exhibited, to the eyes of the Roman people, a grateful spectacle of blood and cruelty. Amidst the general joy of the victory of Pollentia, a Christian poet exhorted the emperor to extirpate, by his authority, the horrid custom which had so long

resisted the voice of humanity and religion. The pathetic representations of Prudentius were less effectual than the generous boldness of Telemachus, an Asiatic monk, whose death was more useful to mankind than his life. The Romans were provoked by the interruption of their pleasures; and the rash monk, who had descended into the arena to separate the gladiators, was overwhelmed under a shower of stones. But the madness of the people soon subsided; they respected the memory of Telemachus, who had deserved the honours of martyrdom; and they submitted, without a murmur, to the laws of Honorius, which abolished for ever the human sacrifices of the amphitheatre. The citizens, who adhered to the manners of their ancestors, might perhaps insinuate, that the last remains of a martial spirit were preserved in this school of fortitude, which accustomed the Romans to the sight of blood, and to the contempt of death: a vain and cruel prejudice, so nobly confuted by the valour of ancient Greece, and of modern Europe!

The recent danger, to which the person of the emperor had been exposed in the defenceless palace of Milan, urged him to seek a retreat in some inaccessible fortress of Italy, where he might securely remain, while the open country was covered by a deluge of Barbarians. On the coast of the Hadriatic, about ten or twelve miles from the most southern of the seven mouths of the Po, the Thessalians had founded the ancient colony of RAVENNA*, which they afterwards resigned to the natives of Umbria. Augustus, who had observed the opportunity of the place, prepared,

Honorius
fixes his
residence at
Ravenna,
A. D. 404.

* This account of Ravenna is drawn from Strabo (l. v. p. 327), Pliny (iii. 20), Stephen of Byzantium (sub voce *Ραβεννα*, p. 651, edit. Berkel.), Claudian (in vi Cons. Honor. 494, &c.), Sidonius Apollinaris (l. i. epist. 5. 8), Jornandes (de Reb. Get. c. 29), Procopius (de Bell. Gothic. l. i. c. 1. p. 309, edit. Louvre), and Cluverius (Ital. Antiq. tom. i. p. 301—307). Yet I still want a local antiquarian, and a good topographical map.

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at the distance of three miles from the old town, a capacious harbour, for the reception of two hundred and fifty ships of war. This naval establishment, which included the arsenals and magazines, the barracks of the troops, and the houses of the artificers, derived its origin and name from the permanent station of the Roman fleet ; the intermediate space was soon filled with buildings and inhabitants, and the three extensive and populous quarters of Ravenna gradually contributed to form one of the most important cities of Italy. The principal canal of Augustus poured a copious stream of the waters of the Po through the midst of the city, to the entrance of the harbour ; the same waters were introduced into the profound ditches that encompassed the walls ; they were distributed, by a thousand subordinate canals, into every part of the city, which they divided into a variety of small islands ; the communication was maintained only by the use of boats and bridges ; and the houses of Ravenna, whose appearance may be compared to that of Venice, were raised on the foundation of wooden piles. The adjacent country, to the distance of many miles, was a deep and impassable morass ; and the artificial causeway, which connected Ravenna with the continent, might be easily guarded, or destroyed, on the approach of a hostile army. These morasses were interspersed, however, with vineyards ; and though the soil was exhausted by four or five crops, the town enjoyed a more plentiful supply of wine than of fresh water. The air, instead of receiving the sickly and almost pestilential exhalations of low and marshy grounds, was distinguished, like the neighbourhood of Alexandria, as uncommonly pure and salubrious ; and this singular advantage was ascribed to the regular tides of the Hadriatic, which swept the canals, interrupted the unwholesome stagnation of the waters, and floated,

every day, the vessels of the adjacent country into the heart of Ravenna. The gradual retreat of the sea has left the modern city at the distance of four miles from the Hadriatic; and as early as the fifth or sixth century of the Christian æra, the port of Augustus was converted into pleasant orchards; and a lonely grove of pines covered the ground where the Roman fleet once rode at anchor. Even this alteration contributed to increase the natural strength of the place; and the shallowness of the water was a sufficient barrier against the large ships of the enemy. This advantageous situation was fortified by art and labour; and in the twentieth year of his age, the emperor of the West, anxious only for his personal safety, retired to the perpetual confinement of the walls and morasses of Ravenna. The example of Honorius was imitated by his feeble successors, the Gothic kings, and afterwards the exarchs, who occupied the throne and palace of the emperors; and, till the middle of the eighth century, Ravenna was considered as the seat of government, and the capital of Italy*.

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The fears of Honorius were not without foundation, nor were his precautions without effect. While Italy rejoiced in her deliverance from the Goths, a furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany, who yielded to the irresistible impulse that appears to have been gradually communicated from the eastern extremity of the continent of Asia. The Chinese annals, as they have been interpreted by the learned industry of the present age, may be usefully applied to reveal the secret and remote causes of the fall of the Roman empire. The extensive territory to the north of the great wall was possessed, after

The revolutions of
Scythia, A. D. 400.

* From the year 404, the dates of the Theodosian Code become sedentary at Constantinople and Ravenna. See Godefroy's Chronology of the Laws, tom. i. p. 148, &c.

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the flight of the Huns, by the victorious Sienpi ; who were sometimes broken into independent tribes, and sometimes re-united under a supreme chief ; till at length, styling themselves *Topa*, or masters of the earth, they acquired a more solid consistence, and a more formidable power. The *Topa* soon compelled the pastoral nations of the eastern desert to acknowledge the superiority of their arms ; they invaded China in a period of weakness and intestine discord ; and these fortunate Tartars, adopting the laws and manners of the vanquished people, founded an Imperial dynasty, which reigned near one hundred and sixty years over the northern provinces of the monarchy. Some generations before they ascended the throne of China, one of the *Topa* princes had enlisted in his cavalry a slave of the name of Moko, renowned for his valour ; but who was tempted, by the fear of punishment, to desert his standard, and to range the desert at the head of a hundred followers. This gang of robbers and outlaws swelled into a camp, a tribe, a numerous people, distinguished by the appellation of *Geougen* ; and their hereditary chieftains, the posterity of Moko the slave, assumed their rank among the Scythian monarchs. The youth of Toulun, the greatest of his descendants, was exercised by those misfortunes which are the school of heroes. He bravely struggled with adversity, broke the imperious yoke of the *Topa*, and became the legislator of his nation, and the conqueror of Tartary. His troops were distributed into regular bands of a hundred and of a thousand men ; cowards were stoned to death ; the most splendid honours were proposed as the reward of valour ; and Toulun, who had knowledge enough to despise the learning of China, adopted only such arts and institutions as were favourable to the military spirit of his government. His tents, which he removed in the winter

season to a more southern latitude, were pitched, during the summer, on the fruitful banks of the Selinga. His conquests stretched from Corea far beyond the river Irtysh. He vanquished, in the country to the north of the Caspian sea, the nation of the *Huns*; and the new title of *Khan*, or *Cagan*, expressed the fame and power which he derived from this memorable victory*.

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The chain of events is interrupted, or rather is concealed, as it passes from the Volga to the Vistula, through the dark interval which separates the extreme limits of the Chinese and of the Roman geography. Yet the temper of the Barbarians, and the experience of successive emigrations, sufficiently declare that the Huns, who were oppressed by the arms of the Geougen, soon withdrew from the presence of an insulting victor. The countries towards the Euxine were already occupied by their kindred tribes; and their hasty flight, which they soon converted into a bold attack, would more naturally be directed towards the rich and level plains, through which the Vistula gently flows into the Baltic sea. The North must again have been alarmed and agitated by the invasion of the Huns; and the nations who retreated before them must have pressed with incumbent weight on the confines of Germany. The inhabitants of those regions, which the ancients have assigned to the Suevi, the Vandals, and the Burgundians, might embrace the resolution of abandoning to the fugitives of Sarmatia their woods and morasses; or at least of discharging their superfluous numbers on the provinces of the Roman empire. About four years after the victorious Toulun had assumed the title of Khan of the Geougen, another barbarian, the haughty Rhodogast, or Radagaisus, marched from the northern

Emigration
of the
northern
Germans,
A. D. 405.

* See M. de Guignes, *Hist. des Huns*, tom. i. p. 179—189. tom. ii. p. 295. 334—338.

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extremities of Germany almost to the gates of Rome, and left the remains of his army to achieve the destruction of the West. The Vandals, the Suevi, and the Burgundians, formed the strength of this mighty host; but the Alani, who had found a hospitable reception in their new seats, added their active cavalry to the heavy infantry of the Germans: and the Gothic adventurers crowded so eagerly to the standard of Radagaisus, that, by some historians, he has been styled the King of the Goths. Twelve thousand warriors, distinguished above the vulgar by their noble birth, or their valiant deeds, glittered in the van; and the whole multitude, which was not less than two hundred thousand fighting men, might be increased by the accession of women, of children, and of slaves, to the amount of four hundred thousand persons. This formidable emigration issued from the same coast of the Baltic which had poured forth the myriads of the Cimbri and Teutones, to assault Rome and Italy in the vigour of the republic. After the departure of those Barbarians, their native country, which was marked by the vestiges of their greatness, long ramparts, and gigantic moles*, remained during some ages a vast and dreary solitude; till the human species was renewed by the powers of generation, and the vacancy was filled by the influx of new inhabitants. The nations who now usurp an extent of land, which they are unable to cultivate, would soon be assisted by the industrious poverty of their neighbours, if the government of Europe did not protect the claims of dominion and property.

Radagaisus
invades
Italy,
A. D. 406.

The correspondence of nations was, in that age, so imperfect and precarious, that the revolutions of the North might escape the knowledge of the court of Ravenna; till the dark cloud, which was collected

* Tacit. de Moribus Germanorum, c. 37.

along the coast of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the Upper Danube. The emperor of the West, if his ministers disturbed his amusements by the news of the impending danger, was satisfied with being the occasion and the spectator of the war. The safety of Rome was intrusted to the counsels and the sword of Stilicho; but such was the feeble and exhausted state of the empire, that it was impossible to restore the fortifications of the Danube, or to prevent, by a vigorous effort, the invasion of the Germans. The hopes of the vigilant minister of Honorius were confined to the defence of Italy. He once more abandoned the provinces, recalled the troops, pressed the new levies, which were rigorously exacted, and pusillanimously eluded; employed the most efficacious means to arrest or allure the deserters; and offered the gift of freedom, and of two pieces of gold, to all the slaves who would enlist. By these efforts he painfully collected, from the subjects of a great empire, an army of thirty or forty thousand men, which, in the days of Scipio or Camillus, would have been instantly furnished by the free citizens of the territory of Rome. The thirty legions of Stilicho were reinforced by a large body of Barbarian auxiliaries; the faithful Alani were personally attached to his service; and the troops of Huns and of Goths, who marched under the banners of their native princes, Huldin and Sarus, were animated by interest and resentment to oppose the ambition of Radagaisus. The king of the confederate Germans passed without resistance the Alps, the Po, and the Apennine; leaving on one hand the inaccessible palace of Honorius, securely buried among the marshes of Ravenna; and, on the other, the camp of Stilicho, who had fixed his head-quarters at Ticinum, or Pavia, but who seems to have avoided a decisive battle, till he had assembled his distant

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Florence,and threat-
ens Rome.Defeat and
destruction
of his army
by Stilicho,
A. D. 406.

forces. Many cities of Italy were pillaged, or destroyed; and the siege of Florence, by Radagaisus, is one of the earliest events in the history of that celebrated republic, whose firmness checked and delayed the unskilful fury of the Barbarians. The senate and people trembled at their approach within a hundred and eighty miles of Rome; and anxiously compared the danger which they had escaped, with the new perils to which they were exposed. Alaric was a Christian and a soldier, the leader of a disciplined army; who understood the laws of war, who respected the sanctity of treaties, and who had familiarly conversed with the subjects of the empire in the same camps and the same churches. The savage Radagaisus was a stranger to the manners, the religion, and even the language, of the civilized nations of the South. The fierceness of his temper was exasperated by cruel superstition; and it was universally believed that he had bound himself, by a solemn vow, to reduce the city into a heap of stones and ashes, and to sacrifice the most illustrious of the Roman senators on the altars of those gods who were appeased by human blood.

Florence was reduced to the last extremity; and the fainting courage of the citizens was supported only by the authority of St. Ambrose. On a sudden they beheld from their walls the banners of Stilicho, who advanced with his united force to the relief of the faithful city; and who soon marked that fatal spot for the grave of the Barbarian host. The apparent contradictions of those writers who variously relate the defeat of Radagaisus may be reconciled, without offering much violence to their respective testimonies. Orosius and Augustin, who were intimately connected by friendship and religion, ascribe this miraculous victory to the providence of God, rather than to the valour of man. They strictly ex-

clude every idea of chance, or even of bloodshed; and positively affirm, that the Romans, whose camp was the scene of plenty and idleness, enjoyed the distress of the Barbarians, slowly expiring on the sharp and barren ridge of the hills of Fæsulæ, which rise above the city of Florence. Their extravagant assertion, that not a single soldier of the Christian army was killed, or even wounded, may be dismissed with silent contempt; but the rest of the narrative of Augustin and Orosius is consistent with the state of the war, and the character of Stilicho. Conscious that he commanded the *last* army of the republic, his prudence would not expose it, in the open field, to the headstrong fury of the Germans. The method of surrounding the enemy with strong lines of circumvallation, which he had twice employed against the Gothic king, was repeated on a larger scale, and with more considerable effect. The examples of Cæsar must have been familiar to the most illiterate of the Roman warriors; and the fortifications of Dyrrachium, which connected twenty-four castles by a perpetual ditch and rampart of fifteen miles, afforded the model of an intrenchment which might confine, and starve, the most numerous host of Barbarians. The Roman troops had less degenerated from the industry than from the valour of their ancestors; and if the servile and laborious work offended the pride of the soldiers, Tuscany could supply many thousand peasants, who would labour, though perhaps they would not fight, for the salvation of their native country. The imprisoned multitude of horses and men was gradually destroyed by famine, rather than by the sword; but the Romans were exposed, during the progress of such an extensive work, to the frequent attacks of an impatient enemy. The despair of the hungry Barbarians would precipitate them against the fortifications of Stilicho;

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the general might sometimes indulge the ardour of his brave auxiliaries, who eagerly pressed to assault the camp of the Germans; and these various incidents might produce the sharp and bloody conflicts which dignify the narrative of Zosimus, and the Chronicles of Prosper and Marcellinus. A seasonable supply of men and provisions had been introduced into the walls of Florence; and the famished host of Radagaisus was in its turn besieged. The proud monarch of so many warlike nations, after the loss of his bravest warriors, was reduced to confide either in the faith of a capitulation or in the clemency of Stilicho. But the death of the royal captive, who was ignominiously beheaded, disgraced the triumph of Rome and of Christianity; and the short delay of his execution was sufficient to brand the conqueror with the guilt of cool and deliberate cruelty. The famished Germans, who escaped the fury of the auxiliaries, were sold as slaves, at the contemptible price of as many single pieces of gold: but the difference of food and climate swept away great numbers of those unhappy strangers; and it was observed that the inhuman purchasers, instead of reaping the fruits of their labour, were soon obliged to provide the expense of their interment. Stilicho informed the emperor and the senate of his success; and deserved a second time the glorious title of Deliverer of Italy.

The remainder of
the Germans
invade Gaul,
A. D. 406.
Dec. 31.

The fame of the victory has encouraged a vain persuasion that the whole army, or rather nation, of Germans, who migrated from the shores of the Baltic, miserably perished under the walls of Florence. Such indeed was the fate of Radagaisus himself, of his brave and faithful companions, and of more than one-third of the various multitude of Sueves and Vandals, of Alani and Burgundians, who adhered to the standard of their general. The union of such an

army might excite our surprise, but the causes of separation are obvious and forcible; the pride of birth, the insolence of valour, the jealousy of command, the impatience of subordination, and the obstinate conflict of opinions, of interests, and of passions, among so many kings and warriors, who were untaught to yield, or to obey. After the defeat of Radagaisus, two parts of the German host, which must have exceeded the number of one hundred thousand men, still remained in arms, between the Apennine and the Alps, or between the Alps and the Danube. It is uncertain whether they attempted to revenge the death of their general; but their irregular fury was soon diverted by the prudence and firmness of Stilicho, who opposed their march, and facilitated their retreat; who considered the safety of Rome and Italy as the great object of his care, and who sacrificed, with too much indifference, the wealth and tranquillity of the distant provinces. The Barbarians acquired, from the junction of some Pannonian deserters, the knowledge of the country, and of the roads; and the invasion of Gaul, which Alaric had designed, was executed by the remains of the great army of Radagaisus.

Yet if they expected to derive any assistance from the tribes of Germany, who inhabited the banks of the Rhine, their hopes were disappointed. The Alemanni preserved a state of inactive neutrality; and the Franks distinguished their zeal and courage in the defence of the empire. In the rapid progress down the Rhine, which was the first act of the administration of Stilicho, he had applied himself, with peculiar attention, to secure the alliance of the warlike Franks, and to remove the irreconcilable enemies of peace and of the republic. Marcomir, one of their kings, was publicly convicted, before the tribunal of the Roman magistrate, of violating the faith of treaties.

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He was sentenced to a mild, but distant, exile, in the province of Tuscany; and this degradation of the regal dignity was so far from exciting the resentment of his subjects, that they punished with death the turbulent Sunno, who attempted to revenge his brother; and maintained a dutiful allegiance to the princes who were established on the throne by the choice of Stilicho. When the limits of Gaul and Germany were shaken by the northern emigration, the Franks bravely encountered the single force of the Vandals, who, regardless of the lessons of adversity, had again separated their troops from the standard of their Barbarian allies. They paid the penalty of their rashness; and twenty thousand Vandals, with their king Godigisclus, were slain in the field of battle. The whole people must have been extirpated, if the squadrons of the Alani, advancing to their relief, had not trampled down the infantry of the Franks, who, after an honourable resistance, were compelled to relinquish the unequal contest. The victorious confederates pursued their march, and on the last day of the year, in a season when the waters of the Rhine were most probably frozen, they entered, without opposition, the defenceless provinces of Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suevi, the Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, who never afterwards retreated, may be considered as the fall of the Roman empire in the countries beyond the Alps; and the barriers, which had so long separated the savage and the civilized nations of the earth, were from that fatal moment levelled with the ground.

Desolation
of Gaul,
A. D. 407,
&c.

While the peace of Germany was secured by the attachment of the Franks, and the neutrality of the Alemanni, the subjects of Rome, unconscious of their approaching calamities, enjoyed the state of quiet and prosperity, which had seldom blessed the frontiers of Gaul. Their flocks and herds were permitted to

graze in the pastures of the Barbarians ; their hunters penetrated without fear or danger into the darkest recesses of the Hercynian wood. The banks of the Rhine were crowned, like those of the Tyber, with elegant houses and well cultivated farms ; and if a poet descended the river he might express his doubt on which side was situated the territory of the Romans. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert ; and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed ; and many thousand Christians were inhumanly massacred in the church. Worms perished after a long and obstinate siege ; Strasburgh, Spires, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke ; and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the Barbarians, who drove before them in a promiscuous crowd the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars. The timid and selfish policy of the court of Ravenna might recal the Palatine legions for the protection of Italy ; the remains of the stationary troops might be unequal to the arduous task ; and the Barbarian auxiliaries might prefer the unbounded licence of spoil to the benefits of a moderate and regular stipend. But the provinces of Gaul were filled with a numerous race of hardy and robust youth, who, in the defence of their houses, their families, and their altars, if they had dared to die, would have deserved to vanquish. The knowledge of their native country would have enabled them to oppose continual and insuperable obstacles to the progress of an invader ;

CHAP. and the deficiency of the Barbarians, in arms as well
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 excuses the submission of a populous country to the
 inferior numbers of a veteran army. When France
 was invaded by Charles the Fifth, he inquired of a
 prisoner, how many *days* Paris might be distant from
 the frontier; "Perhaps *twelve*, but they will be days
 "of battle;" such was the gallant answer which
 checked the arrogance of that ambitious prince. The
 subjects of Honorius, and those of Francis I., were
 animated by a very different spirit; and in less than
 two years, the divided troops of the savages of the
 Baltic, whose numbers, were they fairly stated, would
 appear contemptible, advanced, without a combat, to
 the foot of the Pyrenæan mountains.

Revolt of
 the British
 army,
 A. D. 407.

In the early part of the reign of Honorius, the
 vigilance of Stilicho had successfully guarded the re-
 mote island of Britain from her incessant enemies
 of the ocean, the mountains, and the Irish coast.
 But those restless Barbarians could not neglect the
 fair opportunity of the Gothic war, when the walls
 and stations of the province were stripped of the Ro-
 man troops. If any of the legionaries were permitted
 to return from the Italian expedition, their faithful
 report of the court and character of Honorius must
 have tended to dissolve the bonds of allegiance, and
 to exasperate the seditious temper of the British
 army. The spirit of revolt, which had formerly
 disturbed the age of Gallienus, was revived by the
 capricious violence of the soldiers; and the unfor-
 tunate, perhaps the ambitious, candidates, who were
 the objects of their choice, were the instruments, and
 at length the victims, of their passion*. Marcus

* The British usurpers are taken from Zosimus (l. vi. p. 371—375). Orosius (l. vii. c. 40. p. 576, 577). Olympiodorus (apud Photium, p. 180, 181), the ecclesiastical historians, and the Chronicles. The Latins are ignorant of Marcus.

was the first whom they placed on the throne, as the lawful emperor of Britain, and of the West. They violated, by the hasty murder of Marcus, the oath of fidelity which they had imposed on themselves; and *their* disapprobation of his manners may seem to inscribe an honourable epitaph on his tomb. Gratian was the next whom they adorned with the diadem and the purple; and, at the end of four months, Gratian experienced the fate of his predecessor. The memory of the great Constantine, whom the British legions had given to the church and to the empire, suggested the singular motive of their third choice. They discovered in the ranks a private soldier of the name of Constantine, and their impetuous levity had already seated him on the throne, before they perceived his incapacity to sustain the weight of that glorious appellation. Yet the authority of Constantine was less precarious, and his government was more successful, than the transient reigns of Marcus and of Gratian. The danger of leaving his inactive troops in those camps, which had been twice polluted with blood and sedition, urged him to attempt the reduction of the Western provinces. He landed at Boulogne with an inconsiderable force; and after he had reposed himself some days, he summoned the cities of Gaul, which had escaped the yoke of the Barbarians, to acknowledge their lawful sovereign. They obeyed the summons without reluctance. The neglect of the court of Ravenna had absolved a deserted people from the duty of allegiance; their actual distress encouraged them to accept any circumstances of change, without apprehension, and, perhaps, with some degree of hope; and they might flatter themselves, that the troops, the authority, and even the name of a Roman emperor, who fixed his residence in Gaul, would protect the unhappy country from the rage of the Barbarians. The first successes

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Constantine
is acknow-
ledged in
Britain and
Gaul,
A. D. 407.

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of Constantine against the detached parties of the Germans were magnified by the voice of adulation into splendid and decisive victories ; which the reunion and insolence of the enemy soon reduced to their just value. His negotiations procured a short and precarious truce ; and if some tribes of the Barbarians were engaged, by the liberality of his gifts and promises, to undertake the defence of the Rhine, these expensive and uncertain treaties, instead of restoring the pristine vigour of the Gallic frontier, served only to disgrace the majesty of the prince, and to exhaust what yet remained of the treasures of the republic. Elated however with this imaginary triumph, the vain deliverer of Gaul advanced into the provinces of the South, to encounter a more pressing and personal danger. Sarus the Goth was ordered to lay the head of the rebel at the feet of the emperor Honorius ; and the forces of Britain and Italy were unworthily consumed in this domestic quarrel. After the loss of his two bravest generals, Justinian and Nevigastes, the former of whom was slain in the field of battle, the latter in a peaceful but treacherous interview, Constantine fortified himself within the walls of Vienna. The place was ineffectually attacked seven days ; and the Imperial army supported, in a precipitate retreat, the ignominy of purchasing a secure passage from the freebooters and outlaws of the Alps. Those mountains now separated the dominions of two rival monarchs : and the fortifications of the double frontier were guarded by the troops of the empire, whose arms would have been more usefully employed to maintain the Roman limits against the Barbarians of Germany and Scythia.

He reduces
Spain,
A. D. 408.

On the side of the Pyrenees, the ambition of Constantine might be justified by the proximity of danger ; but his throne was soon established by the

conquest, or rather submission, of Spain, which yielded to the influence of regular and habitual subordination, and received the laws and magistrates of the Gallic præfecture. The only opposition which was made to the authority of Constantine proceeded not so much from the powers of government, or the spirit of the people, as from the private zeal and interest of the family of Theodosius. Four brothers had obtained by the favour of their kinsman, the deceased emperor, an honourable rank, and ample possessions, in their native country; and the grateful youths resolved to risk those advantages in the service of his son. After an unsuccessful effort to maintain their ground at the head of the stationary troops of Lusitania, they retired to their estates; where they armed and levied, at their own expense, a considerable body of slaves and dependents, and boldly marched to occupy the strong posts of the Pyrenæan mountains. This domestic insurrection alarmed and perplexed the sovereign of Gaul and Britain; and he was compelled to negotiate with some troops of Barbarian auxiliaries, for the service of the Spanish war. They were distinguished by the title of *Honorians*; a name which might have reminded them of their fidelity to their lawful sovereign; and if it should candidly be allowed that the *Scots* were influenced by any partial affection for a British prince, the *Moors* and the *Marcomanni* could be tempted only by the profuse liberality of the usurper, who distributed among the Barbarians the military, and even the civil, honours of Spain. The nine bands of *Honorians*, which may be easily traced on the establishment of the Western empire, could not exceed the number of five thousand men; yet this inconsiderable force was sufficient to terminate a war, which had threatened the power and safety of Constantine. The rustic army of the

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Theodosian family was surrounded and destroyed in the Pyrenees : two of the brothers had the good fortune to escape by sea to Italy, or the East ; the other two, after an interval of suspense, were executed at Arles ; and if Honorius could remain insensible of the public disgrace, he might perhaps be affected by the personal misfortunes of his generous kinsmen. Such were the feeble arms which decided the possession of the Western provinces of Europe, from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules. The events of peace and war have undoubtedly been diminished by the narrow and imperfect view of the historians of the times, who were equally ignorant of the causes, and of the effects, of the most important revolutions. But the total decay of the national strength had annihilated even the last resource of a despotic government ; and the revenue of exhausted provinces could no longer purchase the military service of a discontented and pusillanimous people.

Negotiation
of Alaric
and Stilicho,
A. D. 404,
—408.

The poet, whose flattery has ascribed to the Roman eagle the victories of Pollentia and Verona, pursues the hasty retreat of Alaric, from the confines of Italy, with a horrid train of imaginary spectres, such as might hover over an army of Barbarians, which was almost exterminated by war, famine, and disease. In the course of this unfortunate expedition, the king of the Goths must indeed have sustained a considerable loss ; and his harassed forces required an interval of repose to recruit their numbers, and revive their confidence. Adversity had exercised, and displayed, the genius of Alaric ; and the fame of his valour invited to the Gothic standard the bravest of the Barbarian warriors ; who, from the Euxine to the Rhine, were agitated by the desire of rapine and conquest. He had deserved the esteem, and he soon accepted the friendship, of Stilicho himself. Renouncing the service of the emperor of the

East, Alaric concluded with the court of Ravenna a treaty of peace and alliance, by which he was declared master-general of the Roman armies throughout the præfecture of Illyricum; as it was claimed, according to the true and ancient limits, by the minister of Honorius. The execution of the ambitious design, which was either stipulated, or implied, in the articles of the treaty, appears to have been suspended by the formidable irruption of Radagaisus; and the neutrality of the Gothic king may perhaps be compared to the indifference of Cæsar, who, in the conspiracy of Catiline, refused either to assist, or to oppose, the enemy of the republic. After the defeat of the Vandals, Stilicho resumed his pretensions to the provinces of the East; appointed civil magistrates for the administration of justice, and of the finances; and declared his impatience to lead to the gates of Constantinople the united armies of the Romans and of the Goths. The prudence, however, of Stilicho, his aversion to civil war, and his perfect knowledge of the weakness of the state, may countenance the suspicion, that domestic peace, rather than foreign conquest, was the object of his policy; and that his principal care was to employ the forces of Alaric at a distance from Italy. This design could not long escape the penetration of the Gothic king, who continued to hold a doubtful, and perhaps a treacherous, correspondence with the rival courts; who protracted, like a dissatisfied mercenary, his languid operations in Thessaly and Epirus, and who soon returned to claim the extravagant reward of his ineffectual services. From his camp near Æmona, on the confines of Italy, he transmitted to the emperor of the West a long account of promises, of expenses, and of demands; called for immediate satisfaction, and clearly intimated the consequences of a refusal. Yet if his conduct was hostile, his

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language was decent and dutiful. He humbly professed himself the friend of Stilicho, and the soldier of Honorius; offered his person and his troops to march, without delay, against the usurper of Gaul; and solicited, as a permanent retreat for the Gothic nation, the possession of some vacant province of the Western empire.

Debates of
the Roman
senate,
A. D. 408.

The political and secret transactions of two statesmen, who laboured to deceive each other and the world, must for ever have been concealed in the impenetrable darkness of the cabinet, if the debates of a popular assembly had not thrown some rays of light on the correspondence of Alaric and Stilicho. The necessity of finding some artificial support for a government, which, from a principle, not of moderation, but of weakness, was reduced to negotiate with its own subjects, had insensibly revived the authority of the Roman senate; and the minister of Honorius respectfully consulted the legislative council of the republic. Stilicho assembled the senate in the palace of the Cæsars; represented, in a studied oration, the actual state of affairs; proposed the demands of the Gothic king, and submitted to their consideration the choice of peace or war. The senators, as if they had been suddenly awakened from a dream of four hundred years, appeared on this important occasion to be inspired by the courage, rather than by the wisdom, of their predecessors. They loudly declared, in regular speeches, or in tumultuary acclamations, that it was unworthy of the majesty of Rome, to purchase a precarious and disgraceful truce from a Barbarian king; and that, in the judgment of a magnanimous people, the chance of ruin was always preferable to the certainty of dishonour. The minister, whose pacific intentions were seconded only by the voices of a few servile and venal followers, attempted to allay the general ferment, by an apology

for his own conduct, and even for the demands of the Gothic prince. “The payment of a subsidy, which had excited the indignation of the Romans, ought not (such was the language of Stilicho) to be considered in the odious light, either of a tribute, or of a ransom, extorted by the menaces of a Barbarian enemy. Alaric had faithfully asserted the just pretensions of the republic to the provinces which were usurped by the Greeks of Constantinople: he modestly required the fair and stipulated recompense of his services: and if he had desisted from the prosecution of his enterprise, he had obeyed, in his retreat, the peremptory, though private, letters of the emperor himself. These contradictory orders (he would not dissemble the errors of his own family) had been procured by the intercession of Serena. The tender piety of his wife had been too deeply affected by the discord of the royal brothers, the sons of her adopted father; and the sentiments of nature had too easily prevailed over the stern dictates of the public welfare.” These ostensible reasons, which faintly disguise the obscure intrigues of the palace of Ravenna, were supported by the authority of Stilicho; and obtained, after a warm debate, the reluctant approbation of the senate. The tumult of virtue and freedom subsided; and the sum of four thousand pounds of gold was granted under the name of a subsidy, to secure the peace of Italy, and to conciliate the friendship of the king of the Goths. Lampadius alone, one of the most illustrious members of the assembly, still persisted in his dissent; exclaimed with a loud voice, “This is not a treaty of peace, but of servitude;” and escaped the danger of such bold opposition by immediately retiring to the sanctuary of a Christian church.

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XXIV.

Intrigues of
the palace,
A. D. 408.
May.

But the reign of Stilicho drew towards its end ; and the proud minister might perceive the symptoms of his approaching disgrace. The generous boldness of Lampadius had been applauded ; and the senate, so patiently resigned to a long servitude, rejected with disdain the offer of invidious and imaginary freedom. The troops, who still assumed the name and prerogatives of the Roman legions, were exasperated by the partial affection of Stilicho for the Barbarians : and the people imputed to the mischievous policy of the minister the public misfortunes, which were the natural consequence of their own degeneracy. Yet Stilicho might have continued to brave the clamours of the people, and even of the soldiers, if he could have maintained his dominion over the feeble mind of his pupil. But the respectful attachment of Honorius was converted into fear, suspicion, and hatred. The crafty Olympius had secretly undermined the benefactor, by whose favour he was promoted to the honourable offices of the Imperial palace. Olympius revealed to the unsuspecting emperor, who had attained the twenty-fifth year of his age, that he was without weight or authority in his own government ; and artfully alarmed his timid and indolent disposition by a lively picture of the designs of Stilicho, who already meditated the death of his sovereign, with the ambitious hope of placing the diadem on the head of his son Eucherius. The emperor was instigated by his new favourite to assume the tone of independent dignity ; and the minister was astonished to find, that secret resolutions were formed in the court and council, which were repugnant to his interest, or to his intentions. Instead of residing in the palace of Rome, Honorius declared, that it was his pleasure to return to the secure fortress of Ravenna. On the

first intelligence of the death of his brother Arcadius, he prepared to visit Constantinople, and to regulate, with the authority of a guardian, the provinces of the infant Theodosius. The representation of the difficulty and expense of such a distant expedition checked this strange and sudden sally of active diligence; but the dangerous project of showing the emperor to the camp of Pavia, which was composed of the Roman troops, the enemies of Stilicho and his Barbarian auxiliaries, remained fixed and unalterable. The minister was pressed, by the advice of his confident Justinian, a Roman advocate, of a lively and penetrating genius, to oppose a journey so prejudicial to his reputation and safety. His strenuous, but ineffectual, efforts confirmed the triumph of Olympius; and the prudent lawyer withdrew himself from the impending ruin of his patron.

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In the passage of the emperor through Bologna, a mutiny of the guards was excited and appeased by the secret policy of Stilicho; who announced his instructions to decimate the guilty, and ascribed to his own intercession the merit of their pardon. After this tumult, Honorius embraced, for the last time, the minister whom he now considered as a tyrant, and proceeded on his way to the camp of Pavia, where he was received by the loyal acclamations of the troops who were assembled for the service of the Gallic war. On the morning of the fourth day, he pronounced, as he had been taught, a military oration in the presence of the soldiers, whom the charitable visits and artful discourses of Olympius had prepared to execute a dark and bloody conspiracy. At the first signal, they massacred the friends of Stilicho, the most illustrious officers of the empire; two Prætorian præfects of Gaul and of Italy; two masters-general of the cavalry and infantry; the master of the offices; the questor, the treasurer, and the count of the do-

Disgrace
and death
of Stilicho,
A. D. 408.
Aug. 23.

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mestica. Many lives were lost ; many houses were plundered ; the furious sedition continued to rage till the close of the evening ; and the trembling emperor, who was seen in the streets of Pavia, without his robes or diadem, yielded to the persuasions of his favourite ; condemned the memory of the slain ; and solemnly approved the innocence and fidelity of their assassins. The intelligence of the massacre of Pavia filled the mind of Stilicho with just and gloomy apprehensions : and he instantly summoned, in the camp of Bologna, a council of the confederate leaders, who were attached to his service, and would be involved in his ruin. The impetuous voice of the assembly called aloud for arms, and for revenge ; to march without a moment's delay, under the banners of a hero whom they had so often followed to victory ; to surprise, to oppress, to extirpate the guilty Olympius and his degenerate Romans ; and perhaps to fix the diadem on the head of their injured general. Instead of executing a resolution which might have been justified by success, Stilicho hesitated till he was irrecoverably lost. He was still ignorant of the fate of the emperor ; he distrusted the fidelity of his own party ; and he viewed with horror the fatal consequences of arming a crowd of licentious Barbarians against the soldiers and people of Italy. The confederates, impatient of his timorous and doubtful delay, hastily retired, with fear and indignation. At the hour of midnight, Sarus, a Gothic warrior, renowned among the Barbarians themselves for his strength and valour, suddenly invaded the camp of his benefactor, plundered the baggage, cut in pieces the faithful Huns who guarded his person, and penetrated to the tent where the minister, pensive and sleepless, meditated on the dangers of his situation. Stilicho escaped with difficulty from the sword of the Goths ; and, after issuing a last and generous admonition to the cities of Italy, to shut

their gates against the Barbarians, his confidence, or his despair, urged him to throw himself into Ravenna, which was already in the absolute possession of his enemies. Olympius, who had assumed the dominion of Honorius, was speedily informed, that his rival had embraced, as a suppliant, the altar of the Christian church. The base and cruel disposition of the hypocrite was incapable of pity or remorse; but he piously affected to elude, rather than to violate, the privilege of the sanctuary. Count Heraclian, with a troop of soldiers, appeared, at the dawn of day, before the gates of the church of Ravenna. The bishop was satisfied by a solemn oath, that the Imperial mandate only directed them to secure the person of Stilicho; but, as soon as the unfortunate minister had been tempted beyond the holy threshold, he produced the warrant for his instant execution. Stilicho supported, with calm resignation, the injurious names of traitor and parricide; repressed the unseasonable zeal of his followers, who were ready to attempt an ineffectual rescue; and, with a firmness not unworthy of the last of the Roman generals, submitted his neck to the sword of Heraclian*.

The servile crowd of the palace, who had so long adored the fortune of Stilicho, affected to insult his fall; and the most distant connexion with the master-general of the West, which had so lately been a title to wealth and honours, was studiously denied, and rigorously punished. His family, united by the triple alliance with the family of Theodosius, might envy the condition of the meanest peasant. The flight of his son Eucherius was intercepted; and the death of that innocent youth soon followed the divorce of

His memory persecuted.

* Zosimus (l. v. p. 336—345) has copiously, though not clearly, related the disgrace and death of Stilicho. Olympiodorus (apud Phot. p. 177). Orosius (l. vii. c. 38, p. 571, 572), Sozomen (l. ix. c. 4), and Philostorgius (l. xi. c. 3, l. xii. c. 2), afford supplemental hints.

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Thermantia, who filled the place of her sister Maria; and who, like Maria, had remained a virgin in the Imperial bed. The friends of Stilicho, who had escaped the massacre at Pavia, were persecuted by the implacable revenge of Olympius: and the most exquisite cruelty was employed to extort the confession of a treasonable and sacrilegious conspiracy. They died in silence: their firmness justified the choice, and perhaps absolved the innocence of their patron; and the despotic power, which could take his life without a trial, and stigmatize his memory without a proof, has no jurisdiction over the impartial suffrage of posterity. The services of Stilicho are great and manifest; his crimes, as they are vaguely stated in the language of flattery and hatred, are obscure, at least, and improbable. About four months after his death, an edict was published in the name of Honorius, to restore the free communication of the two empires, which had been so long interrupted by the *public enemy*. The minister whose fame and fortune depended on the prosperity of the state was accused of betraying Italy to the Barbarians; whom he repeatedly vanquished at Pollentia, at Verona, and before the walls of Florence. His pretended design of placing the diadem on the head of his son Eucherius could not have been conducted without preparations or accomplices; and the ambitious father would not surely have left the future emperor, till the twentieth year of his age, in the humble station of tribune of the notaries. The son of Stilicho, however, was educated in the bosom of Christianity, which his father had uniformly professed, and zealously supported. Serena had borrowed her magnificent necklace from the statue of Vesta; and the Pagans execrated the memory of the sacrilegious minister, by whose order the Sibylline books, the oracles of Rome, had been committed to the flames.

The pride and power of Stilicho constituted his real guilt. An honourable reluctance to shed the blood of his countrymen appears to have contributed to the success of his unworthy rival; and it is the last humiliation of the character of Honorius, that posterity has not condescended to reproach him with his base ingratitude to the guardian of his youth, and the support of his empire.

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Among the train of dependents whose wealth and dignity attracted the notice of their own times, *our* curiosity is excited by the celebrated name of the poet Claudian, who enjoyed the favour of Stilicho, and was overwhelmed in the ruin of his patron. The titular offices of tribune and notary fixed his rank in the Imperial court: he was indebted to the powerful intercession of Serena for his marriage with a very rich heiress of the province of Africa; and the statue of Claudian, erected in the forum of Trajan, was a monument of the taste and liberality of the Roman senate. After the praises of Stilicho became offensive and criminal, Claudian was exposed to the enmity of a powerful and unforgiving courtier, whom he had provoked by the insolence of wit. He had compared, in a lively epigram, the opposite characters of two Prætorian præfects of Italy; he contrasts the innocent repose of a philosopher, who sometimes resigned the hours of business to slumber, perhaps to study, with the interested diligence of a rapacious minister, indefatigable in the pursuit of unjust or sacrilegious gain. "How happy," continues Claudian, "how happy might it be for the people of Italy, if Mallius could be constantly awake, and if Hadrian would always sleep!" The repose of Mallius was not disturbed by this friendly and gentle admonition; but the cruel vigilance of Hadrian watched the opportunity of revenge, and easily obtained, from the enemies of Stilicho, the trifling sacrifice of an ob-

The poet
Claudian.

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noxious poet. The poet concealed himself, however, during the tumult of the revolution ; and, consulting the dictates of prudence rather than of honour, he addressed, in the form of an epistle, a suppliant and humble recantation to the offended præfect. He deplores, in mournful strains, the fatal indiscretion into which he had been hurried by passion and folly ; submits to the imitation of his adversary the generous examples of the clemency of gods, of heroes, and of lions ; and expresses his hope, that the magnanimity of Hadrian will not trample on a defenceless and contemptible foe, already humbled by disgrace and poverty ; and deeply wounded by the exile, the tortures, and the death of his dearest friends. Whatever might be the success of his prayer, or the accidents of his future life, the period of a few years levelled in the grave the minister and the poet : but the name of Hadrian is almost sunk in oblivion, while Claudian is read with pleasure in every country which has retained, or acquired, the knowledge of the Latin language. If we fairly balance his merits and his defects, we shall acknowledge, that Claudian does not either satisfy or silence our reason. It would not be easy to produce a passage that deserves the epithet of sublime or pathetic ; to select a verse that melts the heart, or enlarges the imagination. We should vainly seek, in the poems of Claudian, the happy invention, and artificial conduct, of an interesting fable ; or the just and lively representation of the characters and situations of real life. For the service of his patron, he published occasional panegyrics and invectives : and the design of these slavish compositions encouraged his propensity to exceed the limits of truth and nature. These imperfections, however, are compensated in some degree by the poetical virtues of Claudian. He was endowed with the rare and precious talent of raising the meanest, of adorning

the most barren, and of diversifying the most similar, topics : his colouring, more especially in descriptive poetry, is soft and splendid ; and he seldom fails to display, and even to abuse, the advantages of a cultivated understanding, a copious fancy, an easy, and sometimes forcible, expression ; and a perpetual flow of harmonious versification. To these commendations, independent of any accidents of time and place, we must add the peculiar merit which Claudian derived from the unfavourable circumstances of his birth. In the decline of arts and of empire, a native of Egypt*, who had received the education of a Greek, assumed, in a mature age, the familiar use, and absolute command, of the Latin language† ; soared above the heads of his feeble contemporaries ; and placed himself, after an interval of three hundred years, among the poets of ancient Rome‡.

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* National vanity has made him a Florentine, or a Spaniard. But the first epistle of Claudian proves him a native of Alexandria (Fabricius, *Bibliot. Latin.* tom. iii. p. 191—202, edit. Ernest.).

† His first Latin verses were composed during the consulship of Probinus, A. D. 395.

Romanos bibimus primum, te consule, fontes,
Et Latine cessit Graia Thalia togæ.

Besides some Greek epigrams, which are still extant, the Latin poet had composed, in Greek, the *Antiquities of Tarsus*, *Anazarbus*, *Berytus*, *Nice*, &c. It is more easy to supply the loss of good poetry, than of authentic history.

‡ Strada (*Prolusion* v. vi.) allows him to contend with the five heroic poets, *Lucretius*, *Virgil*, *Ovid*, *Lucan*, and *Statius*. His patron is the accomplished courtier *Balthazar Castiglione*. His admirers are numerous and passionate. Yet the rigid critics reproach the exotic weeds, or flowers, which spring too luxuriantly in his Latian soil.

CHAP. XXV.

Invasion of Italy by Alaric.—Manners of the Roman Senate and People.—Rome is thrice besieged, and at length pillaged by the Goths.—Death of Alaric.—The Goths evacuate Italy.—Fall of Constantine.—Gaul and Spain are occupied by the Barbarians.—Independence of Britain.

CHAP.
XXV.

Weakness
of the court
of Ravenna,
A. D. 408.
Sept.

THE incapacity of a weak and distracted government may often assume the appearance, and produce the effects, of a treasonable correspondence with the public enemy. If Alaric himself had been introduced into the council of Ravenna, he would probably have advised the same measures which were actually pursued by the ministers of Honorius*. The king of the Goths would have conspired, perhaps with some reluctance, to destroy the formidable adversary by whose arms, in Italy as well as in Greece, he had been twice overthrown. *Their* active and interested hatred laboriously accomplished the disgrace and ruin of the great Stilicho. The valour of Sarus, his fame in arms, and his personal or hereditary influence over the confederate Barbarians, could recommend him only to the friends of their country, who despised, or detested, the worthless characters of Turpilio, Varanes, and Vigilantius. By the pressing instances of the new favourites, these generals, unworthy as they had shown themselves of the name of soldiers, were promoted to the command of the cavalry, of the infantry, and of the domestic troops. These measures, so advantageous to an enemy, Alaric would have approved, and might perhaps have suggested; but it

* The series of events, from the death of Stilicho to the arrival of Alaric before Rome, can only be found in Zosimus, l. v. p. 347—350.

may seem doubtful whether the Barbarian would have promoted his interest at the expense of the inhuman and absurd cruelty which was perpetrated by the direction, or at least with the connivance, of the Imperial ministers. The foreign auxiliaries, who had been attached to the person of Stilicho, lamented his death ; but the desire of revenge was checked by a natural apprehension for the safety of their wives and children, who were detained as hostages in the strong cities of Italy, where they had likewise deposited their most valuable effects. At the same hour, and as if by a common signal, the cities of Italy were polluted by the same horrid scenes of universal massacre and pillage, which involved, in promiscuous destruction, the families and fortunes of the Barbarians. Exasperated by such an injury, which might have awakened the tamest and most servile spirit, they cast a look of indignation and hope towards the camp of Alaric, and unanimously swore to pursue, with just and implacable war, the perfidious nation, that had so basely violated the laws of hospitality. By the imprudent conduct of the ministers of Honorius, the republic lost the assistance, and deserved the enmity, of thirty thousand of her bravest soldiers ; and the weight of that formidable army, which alone might have determined the event of the war, was transferred from the scale of the Romans into that of the Goths.

In the arts of negotiation, as well as in those of war, the Gothic king maintained his superior ascendant over an enemy whose seeming changes proceeded from the total want of counsel and design. From his camp, on the confines of Italy, Alaric attentively observed the revolutions of the palace, watched the progress of faction and discontent, disguised the hostile aspect of a Barbarian invader, and assumed the more popular appearance of a friend and ally of the great Stilicho ; to whose virtues, when they were no

Alaric
marches to
Rome,
A. D. 408.
Oct. &c.

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longer formidable, he could pay a just tribute of sincere praise and regret. The pressing invitation of the malcontents, who urged the king of the Goths to invade Italy, was enforced by a lively sense of his personal injuries ; and he might speciously complain, that the Imperial ministers still delayed and eluded the payment of the four thousand pounds of gold, which had been granted by the Roman senate, either to reward his services, or to appease his fury. His decent firmness was supported by an artful moderation, which contributed to the success of his designs. He required a fair and reasonable satisfaction ; but he gave the strongest assurances, that, as soon as he had obtained it, he would immediately retire. He refused to trust the faith of the Romans, unless Ætius and Jason, the sons of two great officers of state, were sent as hostages to his camp : but he offered to deliver, in exchange, several of the noblest youths of the Gothic nation. The modesty of Alaric was interpreted, by the ministers of Ravenna, as a sure evidence of his weakness and fear. They disdained either to negotiate a treaty, or to assemble an army ; and with a rash confidence, derived only from their ignorance of the extreme danger, irretrievably wasted the decisive moments of peace and war. While they expected, in sullen silence, that the Barbarians should evacuate the confines of Italy, Alaric, with bold and rapid marches, passed the Alps and the Po ; hastily pillaged the cities of Aquileia, Altinum, Concordia, and Cremona, which yielded to his arms ; increased his forces by the accession of thirty thousand auxiliaries ; and without meeting a single enemy in the field, advanced as far as the edge of the morass which protected the impregnable residence of the emperor of the West. Instead of attempting the hopeless siege of Ravenna, the prudent leader of the Goths proceeded to Rimini, stretched his ravages along the

sea-coast of the Hadriatic, and meditated the conquest of the ancient mistress of the world. He felt that his genius and his fortune were equal to the most arduous enterprises; and the enthusiasm which he communicated to the Goths insensibly removed the popular, and almost superstitious, reverence of the nations for the majesty of the Roman name. His troops, animated by the hopes of spoil, followed the course of the Flaminian way, occupied the unguarded passes of the Apennine, descended into the rich plains of Umbria; and, as they lay encamped on the banks of the Clitumnus, might wantonly slaughter and devour the milk-white oxen, which had been so long reserved for the use of Roman triumphs. A lofty situation, and a seasonable tempest of thunder and lightning, preserved the little city of Narni; but the king of the Goths, despising the ignoble prey, still advanced with unabated vigour; and after he had passed through the stately arches, adorned with the spoils of Barbaric victories, he pitched his camp under the walls of Rome.

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During a period of six hundred and nineteen years, the seat of empire had never been violated by the presence of a foreign enemy. The unsuccessful expedition of Hannibal served only to display the character of the senate and people; of a senate degraded, rather than ennobled, by the comparison of an assembly of kings; and of a people to whom the ambassador of Pyrrhus ascribed the inexhaustible resources of the Hydra. Each of the senators, in the time of the Punic war, had accomplished his term of military service, either in a subordinate or a superior station; and the decree, which invested with temporary command all those who had been consuls, or censors, or dictators, gave the republic the immediate assistance of many brave and experienced generals.

Hannibal
at the gates
of Rome.

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In the beginning of the war, the Roman people consisted of two hundred and fifty thousand citizens of an age to bear arms. Fifty thousand had already died in the defence of their country ; and the twenty-three legions which were employed in the different camps of Italy, Greece, Sardinia, Sicily, and Spain, required about one hundred thousand men. But there still remained an equal number in Rome, and the adjacent territory, who were animated by the same intrepid courage ; and every citizen was trained from his earliest youth in the discipline and exercises of a soldier. Hannibal was astonished by the constancy of the senate, who, without raising the siege of Capua, or recalling their scattered forces, expected his approach. He encamped on the banks of the Anio, at the distance of three miles from the city : and he was soon informed that the ground on which he had pitched his tent was sold for an adequate price at a public auction ; and that a body of troops was dismissed by an opposite road to reinforce the legions of Spain. He led his Africans to the gates of Rome, where he found three armies in order of battle prepared to receive him ; but Hannibal dreaded the event of a combat from which he could not hope to escape unless he destroyed the last of his enemies ; and his speedy retreat confessed the invincible courage of the Romans.

Genealogy
of the se-
nators.

From the time of the Punic war the uninterrupted succession of senators had preserved the name and image of the republic ; and the degenerate subjects of Honorius ambitiously derived their descent from the heroes who had repulsed the arms of Hannibal, and subdued the nations of the earth. The temporal honours which the devout Paula inherited and despised are carefully recapitulated by Jerom, the guide of her conscience and the historian of her

life. The genealogy of her father, Rogatus, which ascended as high as Agamemnon, might seem to betray a Grecian origin ; but her mother, Blæsilla, numbered the Scipios, Æmilius Paulus, and the Gracchi, in the list of her ancestors ; and Toxotius, the husband of Paula, deduced his royal lineage from Æneas, the father of the Julian line. The vanity of the rich, who desired to be noble, was gratified by these lofty pretensions. Encouraged by the applause of their parasites, they easily imposed on the credulity of the vulgar ; and were countenanced, in some measure, by the custom of adopting the name of their patron, which had always prevailed among the freedmen and clients of illustrious families. Most of those families, however, attacked by so many causes of external violence or internal decay, were gradually extirpated : and it would be more reasonable to seek for a lineal descent of twenty generations among the mountains of the Alps, or in the peaceful solitude of Apulia, than on the theatre of Rome, the seat of fortune, of danger, and of perpetual revolutions. Under each successive reign, and from every province of the empire, a crowd of hardy adventurers, rising to eminence by their talents or their vices, usurped the wealth, the honours, and the palaces of Rome ; and oppressed, or protected, the poor and humble remains of consular families, who were ignorant, perhaps, of the glory of their ancestors.

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In the time of Jerom and Claudian, the senators unanimously yielded the pre-eminence to the Anician line ; and a slight view of *their* history will serve to appreciate the rank and antiquity of the noble families, which contended only for the second place. During the five first ages of the city, the name of the Anicians was unknown ; they appear to have derived their origin from Præneste ; and the ambition of

The Anician
family.

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those new citizens was long satisfied with the Plebeian honours of tribunes of the people. One hundred and sixty-eight years before the Christian æra, the family was ennobled by the Prætorship of Anicius, who gloriously terminated the Illyrian war by the conquest of the nation, and the captivity of their king. From the triumph of that general, three consulships in distant periods mark the succession of the Anician name. From the reign of Diocletian to the final extinction of the Western empire, that name shone with a lustre which was not eclipsed in the public estimation by the majesty of the Imperial purple. The several branches to whom it was communicated united, by marriage or inheritance, the wealth and titles of the Annian, the Petronian, and the Olybrian houses; and in each generation the number of consulships was multiplied by an hereditary claim. The Anician family excelled in faith and in riches: they were the first of the Roman senate who embraced Christianity; and it is probable that Anicius Julian, who was afterwards consul and præfect of the city, atoned for his attachment to the party of Maxentius by the readiness with which he accepted the religion of Constantine. Their ample patrimony was increased by the industry of Probus, the chief of the Anician family, who shared with Gratian the honours of the consulship, and exercised four times the high office of Prætorian præfect. His immense estates were scattered over the wide extent of the Roman world; and though the public might suspect or disapprove the methods by which they had been acquired, the generosity and magnificence of that fortunate statesman deserved the gratitude of his clients, and the admiration of strangers. Such was the respect entertained for his memory, that the two sons of Probus, in their earliest youth, and at the re-

quest of the senate, were associated in the consular dignity: a memorable distinction, without example in the annals of Rome. CHAP.
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“The marbles of the Anician palace” were used as a proverbial expression of opulence and splendour; but the nobles and senators of Rome aspired, in due gradation, to imitate that illustrious family. The accurate description of the city, which was composed in the Theodosian age, enumerates one thousand seven hundred and eighty *houses*, the residence of wealthy and honourable citizens*. Many of these stately mansions might almost excuse the exaggeration of the poet, that Rome contained a multitude of palaces, and that each palace was equal to a city: since it included within its own precincts every thing which could be subservient either to use or luxury; markets, hippodromes, temples, fountains, baths, porticos, shady groves, and artificial aviaries†. The historian Olympiodorus, who represents the state of Rome when it was besieged by the Goths‡, continues to observe, that several of the richest senators received from their estates an annual income of four thousand pounds of gold, above one hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling; without computing the stated provision of corn and wine, which, had they been sold, might have equalled in value one-third of the money. Compared to this immoderate wealth, an ordinary revenue of a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds of gold might be considered as no

* See Nardini, *Roma Antica*, p. 89. 498. 500.

† *Quid loquar inclusas inter laquearia sylvas;
Vernula quæ vario carmine ludit avis.*
Claud. Rutil. Numatian *Itinerar.* ver. 111.

The poet lived at the time of the Gothic invasion. A moderate palace would have covered Cincinnatus's farm of four acres (*Val. Max.* iv. 4). *In laxitatem ruris excurrunt*, says Seneca, *Epist.* 114. See a judicious note of Mr. Hume, *Essays*, vol. i. p. 562. last 8vo edition.

‡ This curious account of Rome, in the reign of Honorius, is found in a fragment of the historian Olympiodorus, ap. Photium, p. 197.

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more than adequate to the dignity of the senatorian rank, which required many expenses of a public and ostentatious kind. Several examples are recorded in the age of Honorius of vain and popular nobles, who celebrated the year of their prætorship by a festival, which lasted seven days, and cost above one hundred thousand pounds sterling. The estates of the Roman senators, which so far exceeded the proportion of modern wealth, were not confined to the limits of Italy. Their possessions extended far beyond the Ionian and Ægean seas, to the most distant provinces; the city of Nicopolis, which Augustus had founded as an eternal monument of the Actian victory, was the property of the devout Paula; and it is observed by Seneca, that the rivers which had divided hostile nations now flowed through the lands of private citizens. According to their temper and circumstances, the estates of the Romans were either cultivated by the labour of their slaves, or granted, for a certain stipulated rent, to the industrious farmer. The economical writers of antiquity strenuously recommend the former method, wherever it may be practicable; but if the object should be removed, by its distance or magnitude, from the immediate eye of the master, they prefer the active care of an old hereditary tenant, attached to the soil, and interested in the produce, to the mercenary administration of a negligent, perhaps an unfaithful, steward.

Their
manners.

The opulent nobles of an immense capital, who were never excited by the pursuit of military glory, and seldom engaged in the occupations of civil government, naturally resigned their leisure to the business and amusements of private life. At Rome, commerce was always held in contempt: but the senators, from the first age of the republic, increased their patrimony, and multiplied their clients, by the lucrative practice of usury; and the obsolete laws

were eluded, or violated, by the mutual inclinations and interest of both parties. A considerable mass of treasure must always have existed at Rome, either in the current coin of the empire, or in the form of gold and silver plate; and there were many sideboards in the time of Pliny, which contained more solid silver than had been transported by Scipio from vanquished Carthage. The greater part of the nobles, who dissipated their fortunes in profuse luxury, found themselves poor in the midst of wealth, and idle in a constant round of dissipation. Their desires were continually gratified by the labour of a thousand hands; of the numerous train of their domestic slaves, who were actuated by the fear of punishment; and of the various professions of artificers and merchants, who were more powerfully impelled by the hopes of gain. The ancients were destitute of many of the conveniencies of life, which have been invented or improved by the progress of industry; and the plenty of glass and linen has diffused more real comforts among the modern nations of Europe than the senators of Rome could derive from all the refinements of pompous or sensual luxury*. Their luxury, and their manners, have been the subject of minute and laborious disquisition: but as such inquiries would divert me too long from the design of the present work, I shall produce an authentic state of Rome and its inhabitants, which is more peculiarly applicable to the period of the Gothic invasion. Ammianus Marcellinus, who prudently chose the capital of the empire as the residence the best adapted to the historian of his own times, has mixed with the narrative of public events a lively representation of the

* The learned Arbuthnot (Tables of Ancient Coins, &c. p. 153.) has observed with humour, and I believe with truth, that Augustus had neither glass to his windows, nor a shirt to his back. Under the lower empire the use of linen and glass became somewhat more common.

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scenes with which he was familiarly conversant. The judicious reader will not always approve the asperity of censure, the choice of circumstances, or the style of expression : he will perhaps detect the latent prejudices and personal resentments which soured the temper of Ammianus himself ; but he will surely observe, with philosophic curiosity, the interesting and original picture of the manners of Rome*.

Character
of the Ro-
man nobles,
by Ammia-
nus Mar-
cellinus.

“ The greatness of Rome (such is the language of the historian) was founded on the rare and almost incredible alliance of virtue and of fortune. The long period of her infancy was employed in a laborious struggle against the tribes of Italy, the neighbours and enemies of the rising city. In the strength and ardour of youth, she sustained the storms of war ; carried her victorious arms beyond the seas and the mountains ; and brought home triumphant laurels from every country of the globe. At length, verging towards old age, and sometimes conquering by the terror only of her name, she sought the blessings of ease and tranquillity. The VENERABLE CITY, which had trampled on the necks of the fiercest nations, and established a system of laws, the perpetual guardians of justice and freedom, was content, like a wise and wealthy parent, to devolve on the Cæsars, her favourite sons, the care of governing her ample patrimony. A secure and profound peace, such as had been once enjoyed in the reign of Numa, succeeded to the tumults of a republic : while Rome was still adored as the queen of the earth, and the subject nations

* It is incumbent on me to explain the liberties which I have taken with the text of Ammianus. 1. I have melted down into one piece the sixth chapter of the fourteenth, and the fourth of the twenty-eighth book. 2. I have given order and connexion to the confused mass of materials. 3. I have softened *some* extravagant hyperboles, and pared away some superfluities of the original. 4. I have developed some observations which were insinuated, rather than expressed. With these allowances, my version will be found, not literal indeed, but faithful and exact.

“ still revered the name of the people, and the
 “ majesty of the senate. But this native splendour CHAP.
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 “ (continues Ammianus) is degraded, and sullied,
 “ by the conduct of some nobles, who, unmindful of
 “ their own dignity, and of that of their country,
 “ assume an unbounded licence of vice and folly.
 “ They contend with each other in the empty vanity
 “ of titles and surnames, and curiously select, or
 “ invent, the most lofty and sonorous appellations,
 “ Reburus, or Fabunius, Pagonius, or Tarrasius;
 “ which may impress the ears of the vulgar with
 “ astonishment and respect. From a vain ambition
 “ of perpetuating their memory, they affect to mul-
 “ tiply their likeness in statues of bronze and marble ;
 “ nor are they satisfied unless those statues are co-
 “ vered with plates of gold : an honourable distinc-
 “ tion, first granted to Acilius the consul, after he
 “ had subdued by his arms and counsels the power
 “ of king Antiochus. The ostentation of displaying,
 “ of magnifying, perhaps, the rent-roll of the estates
 “ which they possess in all the provinces, from the
 “ rising to the setting sun, provokes the just resent-
 “ ment of every man who recollects, that their poor
 “ and invincible ancestors were not distinguished
 “ from the meanest of the soldiers, by the delicacy
 “ of their food, or the splendour of their apparel.
 “ But the modern nobles measure their rank and
 “ consequence according to the loftiness of their
 “ chariots*, and the weighty magnificence of their

* The *carruca*, or coaches of the Romans, were often of solid silver, curiously carved and engraved ; and the trappings of the mules, or horses, were embossed with gold. This magnificence continued from the reign of Nero to that of Honorius ; and the Appian way was covered with the splendid equipages of the nobles, who came out to meet St. Melania, when she returned to Rome, six years before the Gothic siege (Seneca, epist. lxxxvii. Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii. 49. Paulin. Nolan. apud Baron. Annal. Eccles. A. D. 397. No. 5). Yet pomp is well exchanged for convenience ; and a plain modern coach, that is hung upon springs, is much preferable to the silver or gold *carts* of antiquity, which rolled on the axle-tree, and were exposed, for the most part, to the inclemency of the weather.

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“ dress. Their long robes of silk and purple float in
“ the wind ; and as they are agitated, by art or acci-
“ dent, they occasionally discover the undergarments,
“ the rich tunics, embroidered with the figures of
“ various animals. Followed by a train of fifty ser-
“ vants, and tearing up the pavement, they move
“ along the streets with the same impetuous speed as
“ if they travelled with post-horses ; and the example
“ of the senators is boldly imitated by the matrons
“ and ladies, whose covered carriages are continually
“ driving round the immense space of the city and
“ suburbs. Whenever these persons of high distinc-
“ tion condescend to visit the public baths, they
“ assume, on their entrance, a tone of loud and in-
“ solent command, and appropriate to their own use
“ the conveniencies which were designed for the
“ Roman people. If, in these places of mixed and
“ general resort, they meet any of the infamous mi-
“ nisters of their pleasures, they express their affec-
“ tion by a tender embrace ; while they proudly
“ decline the salutations of their fellow-citizens, who
“ are not permitted to aspire above the honour of
“ kissing their hands or their knees. As soon as
“ they have indulged themselves in the refreshment
“ of the bath, they resume their rings, and the other
“ ensigns of their dignity ; select from their private
“ wardrobe of the finest linen, such as might suffice
“ for a dozen persons, the garments the most agree-
“ able to their fancy, and maintain till their de-
“ parture the same haughty demeanour ; which per-
“ haps might have been excused in the great Mar-
“ cellus, after the conquest of Syracuse. Sometimes,
“ indeed, these heroes undertake more arduous
“ achievements ; they visit their estates in Italy, and
“ procure themselves, by the toil of servile hands,
“ the amusements of the chase. If at any time, but
“ more especially on a hot day, they have courage to

“ sail, on their painted galleys, from the Lucrine lake
 “ to their elegant villas on the sea-coast of Puteoli
 “ and Cayeta, they compare their own expeditions
 “ to the marches of Cæsar and Alexander. Yet
 “ should a fly presume to settle on the silken folds
 “ of their gilded umbrellas; should a sun-beam pe-
 “ netrate through some unguarded and imperceptible
 “ chink, they deplore their intolerable hardships, and
 “ lament, in affected language, that they were not
 “ born in the land of the Cimmerians, the regions
 “ of eternal darkness. In these journeys into the
 “ country* the whole body of the household marches
 “ with their master. In the same manner as the
 “ cavalry and infantry, the heavy and the light armed
 “ troops, the advanced guard and the rear, are mar-
 “ shalled by the skill of their military leaders; so
 “ the domestic officers, who bear a rod as an ensign
 “ of authority, distribute and arrange the numerous
 “ train of slaves and attendants. The baggage and
 “ wardrobe move in the front; and are immediately
 “ followed by a multitude of cooks and inferior mi-
 “ nisters employed in the service of the kitchens
 “ and of the table. The main body is composed of
 “ a promiscuous crowd of slaves, increased by the
 “ accidental concourse of idle or dependent plebeians.
 “ The rear is closed by the favourite band of eunuchs,
 “ distributed from age to youth according to the
 “ order of seniority. Their numbers and their de-
 “ formity excite the horror of the indignant spec-
 “ tators. In the exercise of domestic jurisdiction
 “ the nobles of Rome express an exquisite sensibility

* We may learn from Seneca, epist. cxliii. three curious circumstances relative to the journeys of the Romans. 1. They were preceded by a troop of Numidian light-horse, who announced, by a cloud of dust, the approach of a great man. 2. Their baggage mules transported not only the precious vases, but even the fragile vessels of crystal and *murra*, which last is almost proved, by the learned French translator of Seneca (tom. iii. p. 402—422), to mean the porcelain of China and Japan. 3. The beautiful faces of the young slaves were covered with a medicated crust, or ointment, which secured them against the effects of the sun and frost.

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“ for any personal injury, and a contemptuous indifference for the rest of the human species. When they have called for warm water, if a slave has been tardy in his obedience, he is instantly chastised with three hundred lashes: but should the same slave commit a wilful murder, the master will mildly observe, that he is a worthless fellow; but that, if he repeats the offence, he shall not escape punishment. Hospitality was formerly the virtue of the Romans; and every stranger, who could plead either merit or misfortune, was relieved or rewarded by their generosity. At present, if a foreigner, perhaps of no contemptible rank, is introduced to one of the proud and wealthy senators, he is welcome indeed in the first audience, with such warm professions, and such kind inquiries, that he retires enchanted with the affability of his illustrious friend, and full of regret that he had so long delayed his journey to Rome, the native seat of manners as well as of empire. Secure of a favourable reception, he repeats his visit the ensuing day, and is mortified by the discovery that his person, his name, and his country, are already forgotten. If he still has resolution to persevere, he is gradually numbered in the train of dependents, and obtains the permission to pay his assiduous and unprofitable court to a haughty patron, incapable of gratitude or friendship; who scarcely deigns to remark his presence, his departure, or his return. Whenever the rich prepare a solemn and popular entertainment*; whenever they cele-

* *Distributio solemnium sportularum.* The *sportulæ*, or *sportellæ*, were small baskets, supposed to contain a quantity of hot provisions, of the value of 100 quadrantes, or twelpence halfpenny, which were ranged in order in the hall, and ostentatiously distributed to the hungry or servile crowd, who waited at the door. This indelicate custom is very frequently mentioned in the epigrams of Martial, and the satires of Juvenal. See likewise Suetonius, in Claud. c. 21. in Neron. c. 16. in Domitian, c. 4. 7. These baskets of provisions were afterwards converted into large pieces of gold and silver coin, or plate, which were

“brate, with profuse and pernicious luxury, their
 “private banquets; the choice of the guests is the
 “subject of anxious deliberation. The modest, the
 “sober, and the learned, are seldom preferred; and
 “the nomenclators, who are commonly swayed by
 “interested motives, have the address to insert, in
 “the list of invitations, the obscure names of the
 “most worthless of mankind. But the frequent
 “and familiar companions of the great are those
 “parasites, who practise the most useful of all arts,
 “the art of flattery; who eagerly applaud each
 “word, and every action, of their immortal patron;
 “gaze with rapture on his marble columns, and
 “variegated pavements; and strenuously praise the
 “pomp and elegance, which he is taught to consider
 “as a part of his personal merit. At the Roman
 “tables, the birds, the *squirrels*, or the fish, which
 “appear of an uncommon size, are contemplated
 “with curious attention; a pair of scales is accurately
 “applied to ascertain their real weight; and, while
 “the more rational guests are disgusted by the vain
 “and tedious repetition, notaries are summoned to
 “attest, by an authentic record, the truth of such a
 “marvellous event. Another method of introduc-
 “tion into the houses and society of the great is
 “derived from the profession of gaming, or, as it is
 “more politely styled, of play. The confederates
 “are united by a strict and indissoluble bond of
 “friendship, or rather of conspiracy; a superior de-
 “gree of skill in the *Tesserarian* art (which may be
 “interpreted the game of dice and tables) is a sure
 “road to wealth and reputation. A master of that
 “sublime science, who in a supper or assembly is
 “placed below a magistrate, displays in his counte-

mutually given and accepted even by the persons of the highest rank (See Symmach. epist. iv. 55. ix. 124. and Miscell. p. 256), on solemn occasions, of consulships, marriages, &c.

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“ nance the surprise and indignation, which Cato
“ might be supposed to feel, when he was refused
“ the prætorship by the votes of a capricious people.
“ The acquisition of knowledge seldom engages the
“ curiosity of the nobles, who abhor the fatigue, and
“ disdain the advantages, of study; and the only
“ books which they peruse are the satires of Juvenal,
“ and the verbose and fabulous histories of Marius
“ Maximus. The libraries which they have in-
“ herited from their fathers are secluded, like dreary
“ sepulchres, from the light of day. But the costly
“ instruments of the theatre, flutes, and enormous
“ lyres, and hydraulic organs, are constructed for
“ their use; and the harmony of vocal and instru-
“ mental music is incessantly repeated in the palaces
“ of Rome. In those palaces, sound is preferred to
“ sense, and the care of the body to that of the
“ mind. It is allowed as a salutary maxim, that the
“ light and frivolous suspicion of a contagious malady
“ is of sufficient weight to excuse the visits of the
“ most intimate friends; and even the servants, who
“ are despatched to make the decent inquiries, are
“ not suffered to return home, till they have under-
“ gone the ceremony of a previous ablution. Yet
“ this selfish and unmanly delicacy occasionally
“ yields to the more imperious passion of avarice.
“ The prospect of gain will urge a rich and gouty
“ senator as far as Spoleto; every sentiment of arro-
“ gance and dignity is subdued by the hopes of an
“ inheritance, or even of a legacy; and a wealthy,
“ childless citizen is the most powerful of the Ro-
“ mans. The art of obtaining the signature of a
“ favourable testament, and sometimes of hastening
“ the moment of its execution, is perfectly under-
“ stood; and it has happened, that in the same
“ house, though in different apartments, a husband
“ and a wife, with the laudable design of over-reach-

“ ing each other, have summoned their respective
 “ lawyers, to declare, at the same time, their mutual, CHAP.
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 “ but contradictory, intentions. The distress which
 “ follows and chastises extravagant luxury, often re-
 “ duces the great to the use of the most humiliating
 “ expedients. When they desire to borrow, they
 “ employ the base and supplicating style of the slave
 “ in the comedy ; but when they are called upon to
 “ pay, they assume the royal and tragic declamation
 “ of the grandsons of Hercules. If the demand is
 “ repeated, they readily procure some trusty syco-
 “ phant, instructed to maintain a charge of poison
 “ or magic against the insolent creditor, who is sel-
 “ dom released from prison, till he has signed a dis-
 “ charge of the whole debt. These vices, which
 “ degrade the moral character of the Romans, are
 “ mixed with a puerile superstition, that disgraces
 “ their understanding. They listen with confidence
 “ to the predictions of haruspices, who pretend to
 “ read, in the entrails of victims, the signs of future
 “ greatness and prosperity ; and there are many who
 “ do not presume either to bathe, or to dine, or to
 “ appear in public, till they have diligently consulted,
 “ according to the rules of astrology, the situation of
 “ Mercury, and the aspect of the moon. It is sin-
 “ gular enough, that this vain credulity may often
 “ be discovered among the profane sceptics, who
 “ impiously doubt, or deny, the existence of a celestial
 “ power.”

In populous cities, which are the seat of commerce
 and manufactures, the middle ranks of inhabitants, State and
character of
the people
of Rome.
 who derive their subsistence from the dexterity, or
 labour, of their hands, are commonly the most public,
 the most useful, and, in that sense, the most re-
 spectable, part of the community. But the plebeians
 of Rome, who disdained such sedentary and servile
 arts, had been oppressed from the earliest times by

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the weight of debt and usury ; and the husbandman, during the term of his military service, was obliged to abandon the cultivation of his farm. The lands of Italy, which had been originally divided among the families of free and indigent proprietors, were insensibly purchased or usurped by the avarice of the nobles ; and in the age which preceded the fall of the republic, it was computed that only two thousand citizens were possessed of any independent substance. Yet as long as the people bestowed, by their suffrages, the honours of the state, the command of the legions, and the administration of wealthy provinces, their conscious pride alleviated, in some measure, the hardships of poverty ; and their wants were seasonably supplied by the ambitious liberality of the candidates, who aspired to secure a venal majority in the thirty-five tribes, or the hundred and ninety-three centuries, of Rome. But when the prodigal commons had imprudently alienated not only the *use*, but the *inheritance*, of power, they sunk, under the reign of the Cæsars, into a vile and wretched populace, which must in a few generations have been totally extinguished, if it had not been continually recruited by the manumission of slaves, and the influx of strangers. As early as the time of Hadrian, it was the just complaint of the ingenuous natives, that the capital had attracted the vices of the universe, and the manners of the most opposite nations. The intemperance of the Gauls, the cunning and levity of the Greeks, the savage obstinacy of the Egyptians and Jews, the servile temper of the Asiatics, and the dissolute, effeminate prostitution of the Syrians, were mingled in the various multitude, which, under the proud and false denomination of Romans, presumed to despise their fellow-subjects, and even their sovereigns, who dwelt beyond the precincts of the ETERNAL CITY.

Yet the name of that city was still pronounced with respect: the frequent and capricious tumults of its inhabitants were indulged with impunity; and the successors of Constantine, instead of crushing the last remains of the democracy, by the strong arm of military power, embraced the mild policy of Augustus, and studied to relieve the poverty, and to amuse the idleness, of an innumerable people. I. For the convenience of the lazy plebeians, the monthly distributions of corn were converted into a daily allowance of bread; a great number of ovens was constructed and maintained at the public expense; and at the appointed hour, each citizen, who was furnished with a ticket, ascended the flight of steps which had been assigned to his peculiar quarter or division, and received, either as a gift, or at a very low price, a loaf of bread of the weight of three pounds for the use of his family. II. The forests of Lucania, whose acorns fattened large droves of wild hogs, afforded, as a species of tribute, a plentiful supply of cheap and wholesome meat. During five months of the year, a regular allowance of bacon was distributed to the poorer citizens; and the annual consumption of the capital, at a time when it was much declined from its former lustre, was ascertained, by an edict of Valentinian the Third, at three millions six hundred and twenty-eight thousand pounds*. III. In the manners of antiquity, the use of oil was indispensable for the lamp, as well as for the bath; and the annual tax, which was imposed on Africa for the benefit of Rome, amounted to the weight of three millions of pounds, to the measure, perhaps, of three hundred thousand English gallons. IV. The anxiety of Augustus to provide the metropolis with sufficient

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of bread,
bacon, oil,
wine, &c.

* See Novell. ad calcem Cod. Theod. D. Valent. l. i. tit. xv. This law was published at Rome, June the 29th, A. D. 452.

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plenty of corn was not extended beyond that necessary article of human subsistence; and when the popular clamour accused the dearness and scarcity of wine, a proclamation was issued, by the grave reformer, to remind his subjects, that no man could reasonably complain of thirst, since the aqueducts of Agrippa had introduced into the city so many copious streams of pure and salubrious water. This rigid sobriety was insensibly relaxed; and, although the generous design of Aurelian does not appear to have been executed in its full extent, the use of wine was allowed on very easy and liberal terms. The administration of the public cellars was delegated to a magistrate of honourable rank; and a considerable part of the vintage of Campania was reserved for the fortunate inhabitants of Rome.

Use of the
public baths.

The stupendous aqueducts, so justly celebrated by the praises of Augustus himself, replenished the *Thermæ*, or baths, which had been constructed in every part of the city, with Imperial magnificence. The baths of Antoninus Caracalla, which were open, at stated hours, for the indiscriminate service of the senators and the people, contained above sixteen hundred seats of marble; and more than three thousand were reckoned in the baths of Diocletian*. The walls of the lofty apartments were covered with curious mosaics, that imitated the art of the pencil in the elegance of design, and the variety of colours. The Egyptian granite was beautifully incrustated with the precious green marble of Numidia; the perpetual stream of hot water was poured into the capacious basins, through so many wide mouths of bright and massy silver; and the meanest Roman could purchase, with a small copper coin, the daily enjoyment

* Olympiodor. apud Phot. p. 197.

of a scene of pomp and luxury, which might excite the envy of the kings of Asia. From these stately palaces issued a swarm of dirty and ragged plebeians, without shoes, and without a mantle; who loitered away whole days in the street or Forum, to hear news, and to hold disputes; who dissipated, in extravagant gaming, the miserable pittance of their wives and children; and spent the hours of the night in obscure taverns, and brothels, in the indulgence of gross and vulgar sensuality.

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But the most lively and splendid amusement of the idle multitude depended on the frequent exhibition of public games and spectacles. ^{Games and spectacles.} The piety of Christian princes had suppressed the inhuman combats of gladiators; but the Roman people still considered the Circus as their home, their temple, and the seat of the republic. The impatient crowd rushed at the dawn of day to secure their places, and there were many who passed a sleepless and anxious night in the adjacent porticos. From the morning to the evening, careless of the sun, or of the rain, the spectators, who sometimes amounted to the number of four hundred thousand, remained in eager attention; their eyes fixed on the horses and charioteers, their minds agitated with hope and fear, for the success of the *colours* which they espoused: and the happiness of Rome appeared to hang on the event of a race*. The same immoderate ardour inspired their clamours, and their applause, as often as they were entertained with the hunting of wild beasts, and the various modes of theatrical representation. These representations in modern capitals may deserve to be

* Juvenal. Satir. xi. 191, &c. The expressions of the historian Ammianus are not less strong and animated than those of the satirist; and both the one and the other painted from the life. The numbers which the great Circus was capable of receiving are taken from the *original Notitia* of the city. The differences between them prove that they did not transcribe each other; but the sum may appear incredible, though the country on these occasions flocked to the city.

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considered as a pure and elegant school of taste, and perhaps of virtue. But the Tragic and Comic Muse of the Romans, who seldom aspired beyond the imitation of Attic genius, had been almost totally silent since the fall of the republic; and their place was unworthily occupied by licentious farce, effeminate music, and splendid pageantry. The pantomimes, who maintained their reputation from the age of Augustus to the sixth century, expressed, without the use of words, the various fables of the gods and heroes of antiquity; and the perfection of their art, which sometimes disarmed the gravity of the philosopher, always excited the applause and wonder of the people. The vast and magnificent theatres of Rome were filled by three thousand female dancers, and by three thousand singers, with the masters of the respective choruses. Such was the popular favour which they enjoyed, that, in a time of scarcity, when all strangers were banished from the city, the merit of contributing to the public pleasures exempted *them* from a law, which was strictly executed against the professors of the liberal arts.

Populous-
ness of
Rome.

It is said that the foolish curiosity of Elagabalus attempted to discover, from the quantity of spiders' webs, the number of the inhabitants of Rome. A more rational method of inquiry might not have been undeserving of the attention of the wisest princes, who could easily have resolved a question so important for the Roman government, and so interesting to succeeding ages. The births and deaths of the citizens were duly registered; and if any writer of antiquity had condescended to mention the annual amount, or the common average, we might now produce some satisfactory calculation, which would destroy the extravagant assertions of critics, and perhaps confirm the modest and probable conjectures of philosophers. The most diligent re-

searches have collected only the following circumstances; which, slight and imperfect as they are, may tend, in some degree, to illustrate the question of the populousness of ancient Rome. I. When the capital of the empire was besieged by the Goths, the circuit of the walls was accurately measured by Ammonius, the mathematician, who found it equal to twenty-one miles. It should not be forgotten, that the form of the city was almost that of a circle; the geometrical figure which is known to contain the largest space within any given circumference. II. The architect Vitruvius, who flourished in the Augustan age, and whose evidence, on this occasion, has peculiar weight and authority, observes, that the innumerable habitations of the Roman people would have spread themselves far beyond the narrow limits of the city; and that the want of ground, which was probably contracted on every side by gardens and villas, suggested the common, though inconvenient, practice of raising the houses to a considerable height in the air. But the loftiness of these buildings, which often consisted of hasty work, and insufficient materials, was the cause of frequent and fatal accidents; and it was repeatedly enacted by Augustus, as well as by Nero, that the height of private edifices, within the walls of Rome, should not exceed the measure of seventy feet from the ground. III. Juvenal* laments, as it should seem from his own experience, the hardships of the poorer citizens, to whom he addresses the salutary advice of emigrating, without delay, from the smoke of Rome, since they

* Read the whole third satire, but particularly 166. 223, &c. The description of a crowded *insula*, or lodging-house, in Petronius (c. 95. 97), perfectly tallies with the complaints of Juvenal; and we learn from legal authority, that in the time of Augustus (Heinneccius, Hist. Juris Roman. c. iv. p. 181), the ordinary rent of the several *canacula*, or apartments of an *insula*, annually produced forty thousand sesterces, between three and four hundred pounds sterling (Pandect. l. xix. tit. ii. No. 30); a sum which proves at once the large extent, and high value, of those common buildings.

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might purchase, in the little towns of Italy, a cheerful, commodious dwelling, at the same price which they annually paid for a dark and miserable lodging. House-rent was therefore immoderately dear: the rich acquired, at an enormous expense, the ground which they covered with palaces and gardens; but the body of the Roman people was crowded into a narrow space; and the different floors and apartments of the same house were divided, as it is still the custom of Paris, and other cities, among several families of plebeians. IV. The total number of houses in the fourteen regions of the city is accurately stated in the description of Rome, composed under the reign of Theodosius, and they amount to forty-eight thousand three hundred and eighty-two. The two classes of *domus* and of *insulae*, into which they are divided, include all the habitations of the capital, of every rank and condition, from the marble palace of the Anicii, with a numerous establishment of freedmen and slaves, to the lofty and narrow lodging-house, where the poet Codrus, and his wife, were permitted to hire a wretched garret immediately under the tiles. If we adopt the same average, which, under similar circumstances, has been found applicable to Paris, and indifferently allow about twenty-five persons for each house, of every degree; we may fairly estimate the inhabitants of Rome at twelve hundred thousand: a number which cannot be thought excessive for the capital of a mighty empire, though it exceeds the populousness of the greatest cities of modern Europe.

First siege
of Rome by
the Goths,
A. D. 408.

Such was the state of Rome under the reign of Honorius, at the time when the Gothic army formed the siege, or rather the blockade, of the city*. By a skilful disposition of his numerous forces, who im-

* For the events of the first siege of Rome, which are often confounded with those of the second and third, see Zosimus, l. v. p. 350—354. Sozomen, l. ix.

patiently watched the moment of an assault, Alaric encompassed the walls, commanded the twelve principal gates, intercepted all communication with the adjacent country, and vigilantly guarded the navigation of the Tyber, from which the Romans derived the surest and most plentiful supply of provisions. The first emotions of the nobles, and of the people, were those of surprise and indignation, that a vile Barbarian should dare to insult the capital of the world: but their arrogance was soon humbled by misfortune; and their unmanly rage, instead of being directed against an enemy in arms, was meanly exercised on a defenceless and innocent victim. Perhaps in the person of Serena, the Romans might have respected the niece of Theodosius, the aunt, nay even the adoptive mother, of the reigning emperor: but they abhorred the widow of Stilicho; and they listened with credulous passion to the tale of calumny which accused her of maintaining a secret and criminal correspondence with the Gothic invader. Actuated, or overawed, by the same popular frenzy, the senate, without requiring any evidence of her guilt, pronounced the sentence of her death. Serena was ignominiously strangled; and the infatuated multitude were astonished to find, that this cruel act of injustice did not immediately produce the retreat of the Barbarians, and the deliverance of the city. That unfortunate city gradually experienced the distress of scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine. The daily allowance of three pounds of bread was reduced to one-half, to one-third, to nothing; and the price of corn still continued to rise in a rapid and extravagant proportion. The poorer citizens, who were unable to purchase the necessaries of life, solicited the precarious charity of the rich; and for a

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while the public misery was alleviated by the humanity of Læta, the widow of the emperor Gratian, who had fixed her residence at Rome, and consecrated to the use of the indigent, the princely revenue which she annually received from the grateful successors of her husband. But these private and temporary donatives were insufficient to appease the hunger of a numerous people; and the progress of famine invaded the marble palaces of the senators themselves. The persons of both sexes, who had been educated in the enjoyment of ease and luxury, discovered how little is requisite to supply the demands of nature; and lavished their unavailing treasures of gold and silver, to obtain the coarse and scanty sustenance which they would formerly have rejected with disdain. The food the most repugnant to sense or imagination, the aliments the most unwholesome and pernicious to the constitution, were eagerly devoured, and fiercely disputed, by the rage of hunger. A dark suspicion was entertained, that some desperate wretches fed on the bodies of their fellow-creatures, whom they had secretly murdered; and even mothers (such was the horrid conflict of the two most powerful instincts implanted by nature in the human breast), even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants! Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses, or in the streets, for want of sustenance; and as the public sepulchres without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcasses, infected the air; and the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by the contagion of a pestilential disease. The assurances of speedy and effectual relief, which were repeatedly transmitted from the court of Ravenna, supported, for some time, the fainting resolution of the Romans, till at length the despair of any human aid tempted them to accept

Plague.

the clemency, or at least the moderation, of the king of the Goths. The senate, who in this emergency assumed the supreme powers of government, appointed two ambassadors to negotiate with the enemy. This important trust was delegated to Basilius, a senator, of Spanish extraction, and already conspicuous in the administration of provinces; and to John, the first tribune of the notaries, who was peculiarly qualified, by his dexterity in business, as well as by his former intimacy with the Gothic prince. When they were introduced into his presence, they declared, perhaps in a more lofty style than became their abject condition, that the Romans were resolved to maintain their dignity, either in peace or war; and that, if Alaric refused them a fair and honourable capitulation, he might sound his trumpets, and prepare to give battle to an innumerable people, exercised in arms, and animated by despair. "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed," was the concise reply of the Barbarian; and this rustic metaphor was accompanied by a loud and insulting laugh, expressive of his contempt for the menaces of an unwarlike populace, enervated by luxury before they were emaciated by famine. He then condescended to fix the ransom which he would accept as the price of his retreat from the walls of Rome: *all* the gold and silver in the city, whether it were the property of the state or of individuals; *all* the rich and precious moveables; and *all* the slaves who could prove their title to the name of *Barbarians*. The ministers of the senate presumed to ask, in a modest and suppliant tone, "If such, O king! are your demands, what do you intend to leave us?" "YOUR LIVES;" replied the haughty conqueror: they trembled, and retired. Yet before they retired, a short suspension of arms was granted, which allowed some time for a more temperate negotiation. The stern features of

Alaric accepts a ransom, and raises the siege,
A. D. 409.

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Alaric were insensibly relaxed ; he abated much of the rigour of his terms ; and at length consented to raise the siege, on the immediate payment of five thousand pounds of gold, of thirty thousand pounds of silver, of four thousand robes of silk, of three thousand pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and of three thousand pounds weight of pepper. But the public treasury was exhausted ; the annual rents of the great estates in Italy and the provinces, were intercepted by the calamities of war ; the gold and gems had been exchanged during the famine, for the vilest sustenance ; the hoards of secret wealth were still concealed by the obstinacy of avarice ; and some remains of consecrated spoils afforded the only resource that could avert the impending ruin of the city. As soon as the Romans had satisfied the rapacious demands of Alaric, they were restored, in some measure, to the enjoyment of peace and plenty. Several of the gates were cautiously opened ; the importation of provisions from the river, and the adjacent country, was no longer obstructed by the Goths ; the citizens resorted in crowds to the free market, which was held during three days in the suburbs ; and while the merchants who undertook this gainful trade made a considerable profit, the future subsistence of the city was secured by the ample magazines which were deposited in the public and private granaries. A more regular discipline than could have been expected was maintained in the camp of Alaric ; and the wise Barbarian justified his regard for the faith of treaties, by the just severity with which he chastised a party of licentious Goths, who had insulted some Roman citizens on the road to Ostia. His army, enriched by the contributions of the capital, slowly advanced into the fair and fruitful province of Tuscany, where he proposed to establish his winter-quarters ; and the Gothic standard became the refuge of forty thousand

Barbarian slaves, who had broke their chains, and aspired, under the command of their great deliverer, to revenge the injuries and the disgrace of their cruel servitude. About the same time, he received a more honourable reinforcement of Goths and Huns, whom Adolphus, the brother of his wife, had conducted, at his pressing invitation, from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tyber, and who had cut their way, with some difficulty and loss, through the superior numbers of the Imperial troops. A victorious leader, who united the daring spirit of a Barbarian with the art and discipline of a Roman general, was at the head of a hundred thousand fighting men; and Italy pronounced, with terror and respect, the formidable name of Alaric.

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At the distance of fourteen centuries, we may be satisfied with relating the military exploits of the conquerors of Rome, without presuming to investigate the motives of their political conduct. In the midst of his apparent prosperity, Alaric was conscious, perhaps, of some secret weakness, some internal defect; or perhaps the moderation which he displayed was intended only to deceive and disarm the easy credulity of the ministers of Honorius. The king of the Goths repeatedly declared, that it was his desire to be considered as the friend of peace, and of the Romans. Three senators, at his earnest request, were sent ambassadors to the court of Ravenna, to solicit the exchange of hostages, and the conclusion of the treaty; and the proposals, which he more clearly expressed during the course of the negotiations, could only inspire a doubt of his sincerity, as they might seem inadequate to the state of his fortune. The Barbarian still aspired to the rank of master-general of the armies of the West; he stipulated an annual subsidy of corn and money; and he chose the provinces of Dalmatia, Noricum, and Ve-

Fruitless
negotiations
for peace.
A.D. 409.

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netia, for the seat of his new kingdom, which would have commanded the important communication between Italy and the Danube. If these modest terms should be rejected, Alaric showed a disposition to relinquish his pecuniary demands, and even to content himself with the possession of Noricum; an exhausted and impoverished country, perpetually exposed to the inroads of the Barbarians of Germany*. But the hopes of peace were disappointed by the weak obstinacy, or interested views, of the minister Olympius. Without listening to the salutary remonstrances of the senate, he dismissed their ambassadors under the conduct of a military escort, too numerous for a retinue of honour, and too feeble for an army of defence. Six thousand Dalmatians, the flower of the Imperial legions, were ordered to march from Ravenna to Rome, through an open country, which was occupied by the formidable myriads of the Barbarians. These brave legionaries, encompassed and betrayed, fell a sacrifice to ministerial folly; their general, Valens, with a hundred soldiers, escaped from the field of battle; and one of the ambassadors, who could no longer claim the protection of the law of nations, was obliged to purchase his freedom with a ransom of thirty thousand pieces of gold. Yet Alaric, instead of resenting this act of impotent hostility, immediately renewed his proposals of peace; and the second embassy of the Roman senate, which derived weight and dignity from the presence of Innocent, bishop of the city, was guarded from the dangers of the road by a detachment of Gothic soldiers.

Change and
succession of
ministers.

Olympius might have continued to insult the just resentment of a people, who loudly accused him as the author of the public calamities; but his power

* Zosimus, l. v. p. 367, 368, 369.

was undermined by the secret intrigues of the palace. The favourite eunuchs transferred the government of Honorius, and the empire, to Jovius, the Prætorian præfect; an unworthy servant, who did not atone, by the merit of personal attachment, for the errors and misfortunes of his administration. The exile, or escape, of the guilty Olympius, reserved him for more vicissitudes of fortune: he experienced the adventures of an obscure and wandering life; he again rose to power; he fell a second time into disgrace; his ears were cut off; he expired under the lash; and his ignominious death afforded a grateful spectacle to the friends of Stilicho. The brave Gennerid, a soldier of Barbarian origin, who still adhered to the worship of his ancestors, had been obliged to lay aside the military belt: and though he was repeatedly assured by the emperor himself, that laws were not made for persons of his rank or merit, he refused to accept any partial dispensation, and persevered in honourable disgrace, till he had extorted a general act of justice from the distress of the Roman government. The conduct of Gennerid, in the important station, to which he was promoted or restored, of master-general of Dalmatia, Pannonia, Noricum, and Rhætia, seemed to revive the discipline and spirit of the republic. From a life of idleness and want, his troops were soon habituated to severe exercise, and plentiful subsistence; and his private generosity often supplied the rewards which were denied by the avarice, or poverty, of the court of Ravenna. The valour of Gennerid, formidable to the adjacent Barbarians, was the firmest bulwark of the Illyrian frontier; and his vigilant care assisted the empire with a reinforcement of ten thousand Huns, who arrived on the confines of Italy, attended by such a convoy of provisions, and such a numerous train of sheep and oxen, as might have been sufficient, not only for the march of an army,

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but for the settlement of a colony. But the court and councils of Honorius still remained a scene of weakness and distraction, of corruption and anarchy. Instigated by the præfect Jovius, the guards rose in furious mutiny, and demanded the heads of two generals, and of the two principal eunuchs. The generals, under a perfidious promise of safety, were sent on shipboard, and privately executed; while the favour of the eunuchs procured them a mild and secure exile at Milan and Constantinople. Eusebius the eunuch, and the Barbarian Allobich, succeeded to the command of the bedchamber and of the guards; and the mutual jealousy of these subordinate ministers was the cause of their mutual destruction. By the insolent order of the count of the domestics, the great chamberlain was shamefully beaten to death with sticks, before the eyes of the astonished emperor; and the subsequent assassination of Allobich, in the midst of a public procession, is the only circumstance of his life in which Honorius discovered the faintest symptom of courage or resentment. Yet before they fell, Eusebius and Allobich had contributed their part to the ruin of the empire, by opposing the conclusion of a treaty which Jovius, from a selfish, and perhaps a criminal, motive, had negotiated with Alaric, in a personal interview under the walls of Rimini. During the absence of Jovius, the emperor was persuaded to assume a lofty tone of inflexible dignity, such as neither his situation nor his character could enable him to support: and a letter, signed with the name of Honorius, was immediately despatched to the Prætorian præfect, granting him a free permission to dispose of the public money, but sternly refusing to prostitute the military honours of Rome to the proud demands of a Barbarian. This letter was imprudently communicated to Alaric himself; and the Goth, who in the whole transaction had be-

haved with temper and decency, expressed, in the most outrageous language, his lively sense of the insult so wantonly offered to his person, and to his nation. The conference of Rimini was hastily interrupted; and the præfect Jovius, on his return to Ravenna, was compelled to adopt, and even to encourage, the fashionable opinions of the court. By his advice and example, the principal officers of the state and army were obliged to swear, that, without listening, in *any* circumstances, to *any* conditions of peace, they would still persevere in perpetual and implacable war against the enemy of the republic. This rash engagement opposed an insuperable bar to all future negotiation.

While the emperor and his court enjoyed, with sullen pride, the security of the marshes and fortifications of Ravenna, they abandoned Rome, almost without defence, to the resentment of Alaric. Yet such was the moderation which he still preserved, or affected, that, as he moved with his army along the Flaminian way, he successively despatched the bishops of the towns of Italy to reiterate his offers of peace, and to conjure the emperor, that he would save the city and its inhabitants from hostile fire, and the sword of the Barbarians. These impending calamities were however averted, not indeed by the wisdom of Honorius, but by the prudence or humanity of the Gothic king, who employed a milder, though not less effectual, method of conquest. Instead of assaulting the capital, he successively directed his efforts against the *Port* of Ostia, one of the boldest and most stupendous works of Roman magnificence. The accidents to which the precarious subsistence of the city was continually exposed in a winter navigation, and an open road, had suggested to the genius of the first Cæsar the useful design, which was executed under the reign of Claudius. The artificial moles,

Second siege
of Rome by
the Goths,
A. D. 409.

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which formed the narrow entrance, advanced far into the sea, and firmly repelled the fury of the waves, while the largest vessels securely rode at anchor within three deep and capacious basons, which received the northern branch of the Tyber, about two miles from the ancient colony of Ostia. The Roman *Port* insensibly swelled to the size of an episcopal city, where the corn of Africa was deposited in spacious granaries for the use of the capital. As soon as Alaric was in possession of that important place, he summoned the city to surrender at discretion; and his demands were enforced by the positive declaration, that a refusal, or even a delay, should be instantly followed by the destruction of the magazines, on which the life of the Roman people depended. The clamours of that people, and the terror of famine, subdued the pride of the senate; they listened, without reluctance, to the proposal of placing a new emperor on the throne of the unworthy Honorius; and the suffrage of the Gothic conqueror bestowed the purple on Attalus, præfect of the city. The grateful monarch immediately acknowledged his protector as master-general of the armies of the West; Adolphus, with the rank of count of the domestics, obtained the custody of the person of Attalus; and the two hostile nations seemed to be united in the closest bands of friendship and alliance*.

Attalus is
created emperor
by the
Goths and
Romans.

The gates of the city were thrown open, and the new emperor of the Romans, encompassed on every side by the Gothic arms, was conducted, in tumultuous procession, to the palace of Augustus and Trajan. After he had distributed the civil and military dignities among his favourites and followers, Attalus convened an assembly of the senate; before

* For the elevation of Attalus, consult Zosimus, l. vi. p. 377—380. Sozomen, l. ix. c. 8, 9. Olympiodor. ap. Phot. p. 180, 181. Philostorg. l. xii. c. 3, and Godefroy, Dissertat. p. 470.

whom, in a formal and florid speech, he asserted his resolution of restoring the majesty of the republic, and of uniting to the empire the provinces of Egypt and the ~~East~~, which had once acknowledged the sovereignty of Rome. Such extravagant promises inspired every reasonable citizen with a just contempt for the character of an unwarlike usurper; whose elevation was the deepest and most ignominious wound which the republic had yet sustained from the insolence of the Barbarians. But the populace, with their usual levity, applauded the change of masters. The public discontent was favourable to the rival of Honorius; and the sectaries, oppressed by his persecuting edicts, expected some degree of countenance, or at least of toleration, from a prince, who, in his native country of Ionia, had been educated in the Pagan superstition, and who had since received the sacrament of baptism from the hands of an Arian bishop. The first days of the reign of Attalus were fair and prosperous. An officer of confidence was sent with an inconsiderable body of troops to secure the obedience of Africa; the greatest part of Italy submitted to the terror of the Gothic powers; and though the city of Bologna made a vigorous and effectual resistance, the people of Milan, dissatisfied perhaps with the absence of Honorius, accepted, with loud acclamations, the choice of the Roman senate. At the head of a formidable army, Alaric conducted his royal captive almost to the gates of Ravenna; and a solemn embassy of the principal ministers of Jovius, the Prætorian præfect, of Valens, master of the cavalry and infantry, of the quæstor Potamius, and of Julian, the first of the notaries, was introduced, with martial pomp, into the Gothic camp. In the name of their sovereign, they consented to acknowledge the lawful election of his competitor, and to divide the provinces of Italy and the West between the two

CHAP. XXV. emperors. Their proposals were rejected with disdain; and the refusal was aggravated by the insulting clemency of Attalus, who condescended to promise, that, if Honorius would instantly resign the purple, he should be permitted to pass the remainder of his life in the peaceful exile of some remote island. So desperate indeed did the situation of the son of Theodosius appear, to those who were the best acquainted with his strength and resources, that Jovius and Valens, his minister and his general, betrayed their trust, infamously deserted the sinking cause of their benefactor, and devoted their treacherous allegiance to the service of his more fortunate rival. Astonished by such examples of domestic treason, Honorius trembled at the approach of every servant, at the arrival of every messenger. He dreaded the secret enemies, who might lurk in his capital, his palace, his bedchamber; and some ships lay ready in the harbour of Ravenna, to transport the abdicated monarch to the dominions of his infant nephew, the emperor of the East.

He is degraded by Alaric, A. D. 410.

But at the moment when his despair, incapable of any wise or manly resolution, meditated a shameful flight, a seasonable reinforcement of four thousand veterans unexpectedly landed in the port of Ravenna. To these valiant strangers, whose fidelity had not been corrupted by the factions of the court, he committed the walls and gates of the city; and the slumbers of the emperor were no longer disturbed by the apprehension of imminent and internal danger. The favourable intelligence which was received from Africa suddenly changed the opinions of men, and the state of public affairs. The troops and officers, whom Attalus had sent into that province, were defeated and slain; and the active zeal of Heraclian maintained his own allegiance, and that of his people. The faithful count of Africa transmitted a large sum

of money, which fixed the attachment of the Imperial guards; and his vigilance, in preventing the exportation of corn and oil, introduced famine, tumult, and discontent, into the walls of Rome. The failure of the African expedition was the source of mutual complaint and recrimination in the party of Attalus; and the mind of his protector was insensibly alienated from the interest of a prince, who wanted spirit to command, or docility to obey. The most imprudent measures were adopted without the knowledge, or against the advice, of Alaric; and the obstinate refusal of the senate to allow, in the embarkation, the mixture even of five hundred Goths, betrayed a suspicious and distrustful temper, which, in their situation, was neither generous nor prudent. The resentment of the Gothic king was exasperated by the malicious arts of Jovius, who had been raised to the rank of patrician, and who afterwards excused his double perfidy, by declaring, without a blush, that he had only *seemed* to abandon the service of Honorius, more effectually to ruin the cause of the usurper. In a large plain near Rimini, and in the presence of an innumerable multitude of Romans and Barbarians, the wretched Attalus was publicly despoiled of the diadem and purple; and those ensigns of royalty were sent by Alaric, as the pledge of peace and friendship, to the son of Theodosius*. The officers who returned to their duty were reinstated in their employments, and even the merit of a tardy repentance was graciously allowed: but the degraded emperor of the Romans, desirous of life, and insensible of disgrace, implored the permis-

* See the cause and circumstances of the fall of Attalus in Zosimus, l. vi. p. 380—383. Sozomen, l. ix. c. 8. Philostorg. l. xii. c. 3. The two acts of indemnity in the Theodosian Code, l. ix. tit. xxxviii. leg. 11, 22, which were published the 12th of February, and the 8th of August, A. D. 410, evidently relate to this usurper.

CHAP. sion of following the Gothic camp, in the train of a
XXV. haughty and capricious Barbarian.

Third siege
and sack of
Rome by
the Goths,
A. D. 410,
Aug. 24.

The degradation of Attalus removed the only real obstacle to the conclusion of the peace; and Alaric advanced within three miles of Ravenna, to press the irresolution of the Imperial ministers, whose insolence soon returned with the return of fortune. His indignation was kindled by the report, that a rival chieftain, that Sarus, the personal enemy of Adolphus, and the hereditary foe of the House of Balti, had been received into the palace. At the head of three hundred followers, that fearless Barbarian immediately sallied from the gates of Ravenna; surprised, and cut in pieces, a considerable body of Goths; re-entered the city in triumph; and was permitted to insult his adversary, by the voice of a herald, who publicly declared that the guilt of Alaric had for ever excluded him from the friendship and alliance of the emperor*. The crime and folly of the court of Ravenna was expiated, a third time, by the calamities of Rome. The king of the Goths, who no longer dissembled his appetite for plunder and revenge, appeared in arms under the walls of the capital; and the trembling senate, without any hopes of relief, prepared, by a desperate resistance, to delay the ruin of their country. But they were unable to guard against the secret conspiracy of their slaves and domestics, who, either from birth or interest, were attached to the cause of the enemy. At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was silently opened, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet. Eleven hundred and

* Zosimus, l. vi. p. 384. Sozomen, l. ix. c. 9. Philostorgius, l. xii. c. 3. In this place the text of Zosimus is mutilated, and we have lost the remainder of his sixth and last book, which ended with the sack of Rome. Credulous and partial as he is, we must take our leave of that historian with some regret.

sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the Imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germany and Scythia.

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The proclamation of Alaric, when he forced his entrance into a vanquished city, discovered, however, some regard for the laws of humanity and religion. He encouraged his troops boldly to seize the rewards of valour, and to enrich themselves with the spoils of a wealthy and effeminate people: but he exhorted them, at the same time, to spare the lives of the unresisting citizens, and to respect the churches of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, as holy and inviolable sanctuaries. Amidst the horrors of a nocturnal tumult, several of the Christian Goths displayed the fervour of a recent conversion; and some instances of their uncommon piety and moderation are related, and perhaps adorned, by the zeal of ecclesiastical writers. While the Barbarians roamed through the city in quest of prey, the humble dwelling of an aged virgin, who had devoted her life to the service of the altar, was forced open by one of the powerful Goths. He immediately demanded, though in civil language, all the gold and silver in her possession; and was astonished at the readiness with which she conducted him to a splendid hoard of massy plate, of the richest materials, and the most curious workmanship. The Barbarian viewed with wonder and delight this valuable acquisition, till he was interrupted by a serious admonition, addressed to him in the following words: "These," said she, "are the consecrated vessels belonging to St. Peter; if you presume to touch them, the sacrilegious deed will remain on your conscience. For my part, I dare not keep what I am unable to defend." The Gothic captain, struck with reverential awe, despatched a messenger to in-

Respect of
the Goths
for the
Christian
religion.

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form the king of the treasure which he had discovered; and received a peremptory order from Alaric, that all the consecrated plate and ornaments should be transported, without damage or delay, to the church of the apostle. From the extremity, perhaps, of the Quirinal hill, to the distant quarter of the Vatican, a numerous detachment of Goths, marching in order of battle through the principal streets, protected, with glittering arms, the long train of their devout companions, who bore aloft, on their heads, the sacred vessels of gold and silver; and the martial shouts of the Barbarians were mingled with the sound of religious psalmody. From all the adjacent houses a crowd of Christians hastened to join this edifying procession; and a multitude of fugitives, without distinction of age, or rank, or even of sect, had the good fortune to escape to the secure and hospitable sanctuary of the Vatican.

Pillage and
fire of
Rome.

In the sack of Rome, some rare and extraordinary examples of Barbarian virtue had been deservedly applauded. But the holy precincts of the Vatican, and the apostolic churches, could receive a very small proportion of the Roman people: many thousand warriors, more especially of the Huns, who served under the standard of Alaric, were strangers to the name, or at least to the faith, of Christ; and we may suspect, without any breach of charity or candour, that, in the hour of savage licence, when every passion was inflamed, and every restraint was removed, the precepts of the gospel seldom influenced the behaviour of the Gothic Christians. The writers, the best disposed to exaggerate their clemency, had freely confessed, that a cruel slaughter was made of the Romans; and that the streets of the city were filled with dead bodies, which remained without burial during the general consternation. The despair of the citizens was sometimes converted into fury; and

whenever the Barbarians were provoked by opposition, they extended the promiscuous massacre to the feeble, the innocent, and the helpless. The private revenge of forty thousand slaves was exercised without pity or remorse ; and the ignominious lashes, which they had formerly received, were washed away in the blood of the guilty, or obnoxious, families. The matrons and virgins of Rome were exposed to injuries more dreadful, in the apprehension of chastity, than death itself. But avarice is an insatiate and universal passion ; since the enjoyment of almost every object that can afford pleasure to the different tastes and tempers of mankind may be procured by the possession of wealth. In the pillage of Rome, a just preference was given to gold and jewels, which contain the greatest value in the smallest compass and weight : but, after these portable riches had been removed by the more diligent robbers, the palaces of Rome were rudely stripped of their splendid and costly furniture. The side-boards of massy plate, and the variegated wardrobes of silk and purple, were irregularly piled in the waggons, that always followed the march of a Gothic army. The most exquisite works of art were roughly handled, or wantonly destroyed : many a statue was melted for the sake of the precious materials ; and many a vase, in the division of the spoil, was shattered into fragments by the stroke of a battle-axe. The acquisition of riches served only to stimulate the avarice of the rapacious Barbarians, who proceeded, by threats, by blows, and by tortures, to force from their prisoners the confession of hidden treasure. Visible splendour and expense were alleged as the proof of a plentiful fortune : the appearance of poverty was imputed to a parsimonious disposition ; and the obstinacy of some misers, who endured the most cruel torments before they would discover the secret object of their affection, was fatal to many un-

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happy wretches, who expired under the lash, for refusing to reveal their imaginary treasures. The edifices of Rome, though the damage has been much exaggerated, received some injury from the violence of the Goths. At their entrance through the Salarian gate, they fired the adjacent houses, to guide their march, and to distract the attention of the citizens: the flames, which encountered no obstacle in the disorder of the night, consumed many private and public buildings; and the ruins of the palace of Sallust remained, in the age of Justinian, a stately monument of the Gothic conflagration.

Captives
and fugi-
tives.

Whatever might be the numbers, of equestrian or plebeian rank, who perished in the massacre of Rome, it is confidently affirmed, that only one senator lost his life by the sword of the enemy. But it was not easy to compute the multitudes, who, from an honourable station, and a prosperous fortune, were suddenly reduced to the miserable condition of captives and exiles. As the Barbarians had more occasion for money than for slaves, they fixed, at a moderate price, the redemption of their indigent prisoners; and the ransom was often paid by the benevolence of their friends, or the charity of strangers. The captives, who were regularly sold, either in open market, or by private contract, would have legally regained their native freedom, which it was impossible for a citizen to lose or to alienate*. But as it was soon discovered, that the vindication of their liberty would endanger their lives; and that the Goths, unless they were tempted to sell, might be provoked to murder, their useless prisoners; the civil jurisprudence had been already qualified by a wise regulation, that they should be obliged to serve the moderate term of five years, till they had discharged by their labour the

* See Heineccius, *Antiquitat. Juris Roman.* tom. i. p. 96.

price of their redemption*. The nations who invaded the Roman empire had driven before them, into Italy, whole troops of hungry and affrighted provincials, less apprehensive of servitude than of famine. The calamities of Rome and Italy dispersed the inhabitants to the most lonely, the most secure, the most distant places of refuge. While the Gothic cavalry spread terror and desolation along the sea-coast of Campania and Tuscany, the little island of Igilium, separated by a narrow channel from the Argentarian promontory, repulsed, or eluded, their hostile attempts; and at so small a distance from Rome, great numbers of citizens were securely concealed in the thick woods of that sequestered spot†. The ample patrimonies, which many senatorian families possessed in Africa, invited them, if they had time, and prudence, to escape from the ruin of their country; to embrace the shelter of that hospitable province. The most illustrious of these fugitives was the noble and pious Proba, the widow of the præfect Petronius. After the death of her husband, the most powerful subject of Rome, she had remained at the head of the Anician family, and successively supplied, from her private fortune, the expense of the consulships of her three sons. When the city was besieged and taken by the Goths, Proba supported, with Christian resignation, the loss of immense riches; embarked in a small vessel, from whence she beheld, at sea, the flames of her burning palace, and fled with her daughter Læta, and her grand-daughter, the celebrated virgin, Demetrias, to the coast of Africa. The benevolent profusion with which the matron distributed the fruits, or the price, of her

* Appendix Cod. Theodos. xvi. in Sirmond. Opera, tom. i. p. 735. This edict was published the 11th of December, A. D. 408, and is more reasonable than properly belonged to the ministers of Honorius.

† The island is now called Giglio. See Cluver. Ital. Antiq. l. ii. p. 502.

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estates, contributed to alleviate the misfortunes of exile and captivity. But even the family of Proba herself was not exempt from the rapacious oppression of Count Heraclian, who basely sold, in matrimonial prostitution, the noblest maidens of Rome, to the licentiousness or avarice of the Syrian merchants. The Italian fugitives were dispersed through the provinces, along the coast of Egypt and Asia, as far as Constantinople and Jerusalem; and the village of Bethlem, the solitary residence of St. Jerom and his female converts, was crowded with illustrious beggars of either sex, and every age, who excited the public compassion by the remembrance of their past fortune. This awful catastrophe of Rome filled the astonished empire with grief and terror. So interesting a contrast of greatness and ruin disposed the fond credulity of the people to deplore, and even to exaggerate, the afflictions of the queen of cities.

Sack of
Rome by the
troops of
Charles V.

There exists in human nature a strong propensity to depreciate the advantages, and to magnify the evils of the present times. Yet, when the first emotions had subsided, and a fair estimate was made of the real damage, the more learned and judicious contemporaries were forced to confess, that infant Rome had formerly received more essential injury from the Gauls, than she had now sustained from the Goths in her declining age. The experience of eleven centuries has enabled posterity to produce a much more singular parallel; and to affirm with confidence, that the ravages of the Barbarians, whom Alaric had led from the banks of the Danube, were less destructive, than the hostilities exercised by the troops of Charles the Fifth, a Catholic prince, who styled himself Emperor of the Romans*. The Goths

* The reader who wishes to inform himself of the circumstances of this famous event may peruse an admirable narrative in Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V.

evacuated the city at the end of six days, but Rome remained above nine months in the possession of the Imperialists; and every hour was stained by some atrocious act of cruelty, lust, and rapine. The authority of Alaric preserved some order and moderation among the ferocious multitude, which acknowledged him for their leader and king: but the constable of Bourbon had gloriously fallen in the attack of the walls; and the death of the general removed every restraint of discipline, from an army which consisted of three independent nations, the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Germans. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the manners of Italy exhibited a remarkable scene of the depravity of mankind. They united the sanguinary crimes that prevail in an unsettled state of society, with the polished vices that spring from the abuse of art and luxury; and the loose adventurers, who had violated every prejudice of patriotism and superstition to assault the palace of the Roman pontiff, must deserve to be considered as the most profligate of the *Italians*. At the same æra, the *Spaniards* were the terror both of the Old and New World: but their high-spirited valour was disgraced by gloomy pride, rapacious avarice, and unrelenting cruelty. Indefatigable in the pursuit of fame and riches, they had improved, by repeated practice, the most exquisite and effectual methods of torturing their prisoners.

The retreat of the victorious Goths, who evacuated Rome on the sixth day, might be the result of prudence; but it was not surely the effect of fear. At

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Alaric
evacuates
Rome, and
ravages
Italy,
A. D. 410,
Aug. 29.

vol. ii. p. 283; or consult the *Annali d'Italia* of the learned Muratori, tom. xiv. p. 230—244, octavo edition. If he is desirous of examining the originals, he may have recourse to the eighteenth book of the great, but unfinished, history of Guiccardini. But the account which most truly deserves the name of authentic and original is a little book, intitled *Il Sacco di Roma*, composed, within less than a month after an assault of the city, by the brother of the historian Guiccardini, who appears to have been an able magistrate, and a dispassionate writer.

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Possession
of Italy by
the Goths,
A. D. 408,
—412.

the head of an army, encumbered with rich and weighty spoils, their intrepid leader advanced along the Appian way into the southern provinces of Italy, destroying whatever dared to oppose his passage, and contenting himself with the plunder of the unresisting country. Above four years elapsed from the successful invasion of Italy by the arms of Alaric, to the voluntary retreat of the Goths under the conduct of his successor Adolphus; and, during the whole time, they reigned without control over a country, which, in the opinion of the ancients, had united all the various excellencies of nature and art. The prosperity, indeed, which Italy had attained in the auspicious age of the Antonines, had gradually declined with the decline of the empire. The fruits of a long peace perished under the rude grasp of the Barbarians; and they themselves were incapable of tasting the more elegant refinements of luxury, which had been prepared for the use of the soft and polished Italians. Each soldier, however, claimed an ample portion of the substantial plenty, the corn and cattle, oil and wine, that was daily collected, and consumed, in the Gothic camp; and the principal warriors insulted the villas, and gardens, once inhabited by Lucullus and Cicero, along the beauteous coast of Campania. Their trembling captives, the sons and daughters of Roman senators, presented, in goblets of gold and gems, large draughts of Falernian wine, to the haughty victors; who stretched their huge limbs under the shade of plane-trees, artificially disposed to exclude the scorching rays, and to admit the genial warmth, of the sun. These delights were enhanced by the memory of past hardships: the comparison of their native soil, the bleak and barren hills of Scythia, and the frozen banks of the Elbe, and Danube, added new charms to the felicity of the Italian climate.

Whether fame, or conquest, or riches, were the object of Alaric, he pursued that object with an indefatigable ardour, which could neither be quelled by adversity, nor satiated by success. No sooner had he reached the extreme land of Italy, than he was attracted by the neighbouring prospect of a fertile and peaceful island. Yet even the possession of Sicily he considered only as an intermediate step to the important expedition, which he already meditated against the continent of Africa. The straits of Rhegium and Messina* are twelve miles in length, and, in the narrowest passage, about one mile and a half broad; and the fabulous monsters of the deep, the rocks of Scylla, and the whirlpool of Charybdis, could terrify none but the most timid and unskilful mariners. Yet as soon as the first division of the Goths had embarked, a sudden tempest arose, which sunk, or scattered, many of the transports; their courage was daunted by the terrors of a new element; and the whole design was defeated by the premature death of Alaric, which fixed, after a short illness, the fatal term of his conquests. The ferocious character of the Barbarians was displayed, in the funeral of a hero, whose valour, and fortune, they celebrated with mournful applause. By the labour of a captive multitude, they forcibly diverted the course of the Busentinus, a small river that washes the walls of Consentia. The royal sepulchre, adorned with the splendid spoils, and trophies, of Rome, was constructed in the vacant bed; the waters were then restored to their natural channel; and the secret spot, where the remains of Alaric had been deposited, was for ever concealed by the inhuman massacre of

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XXV.Death of
Alaric,
A. D. 410.

* For the perfect description of the Straits of Messina, Scylla, Charybdis, &c. see Cluverius (*Ital. Antiq.* l. iv. p. 1293, and *Sicilia Antiq.* l. i. p. 60—76), who had diligently studied the ancients, and surveyed with a curious eye the actual face of the country.

CHAP. XXV. the prisoners, who had been employed to execute the work*.

Adolphus, king of the Goths, concludes a peace with the empire, and marches into Gaul. A. D. 412.

The personal animosities, and hereditary feuds, of the Barbarians, were suspended by the strong necessity of their affairs; and the brave Adolphus, the brother-in-law of the deceased monarch, was unanimously elected to succeed to his throne. The character and political system of the new king of the Goths may be best understood from his own conversation with an illustrious citizen of Narbonne; who afterwards, in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, related it to St. Jerom, in the presence of the historian Orosius. “ In the full confidence of valour
“ and victory, I once aspired (said Adolphus) to
“ change the face of the universe; to obliterate the
“ name of Rome; to erect on its ruins the dominion
“ of the Goths; and to acquire, like Augustus, the
“ immortal fame of the founder of a new empire.
“ By repeated experiments, I was gradually con-
“ vinced, that laws are essentially necessary to main-
“ tain and regulate a well-constituted state; and
“ that the fierce untractable humour of the Goths
“ was incapable of bearing the salutary yoke of laws,
“ and civil government. From that moment I pro-
“ posed to myself a different object of glory and
“ ambition; and it is now my sincere wish, that the
“ gratitude of future ages should acknowledge the
“ merit of a stranger, who employed the sword of
“ the Goths, not to subvert, but to restore and
“ maintain, the prosperity of the Roman empire.”
With these pacific views, the successor of Alaric suspended the operations of war; and seriously negotiated with the Imperial court a treaty of friendship and alliance. It was the interest of the ministers

* Jornandes, de Reb. Get. c. 30. p. 654.

of Honorius, who were now released from the obligation of their extravagant oath, to deliver Italy from the intolerable weight of the Gothic powers; and they readily accepted their service against the tyrants and Barbarians who infested the provinces beyond the Alps. Adolphus, assuming the character of a Roman general, directed his march from the extremity of Campania to the southern provinces of Gaul. His troops, either by force or agreement, immediately occupied the cities of Narbonne, Thoulouse, and Bourdeaux; and though they were repulsed by Count Boniface from the walls of Marseilles, they soon extended their quarters from the Mediterranean to the ocean. The oppressed provincials might exclaim, that the miserable remnant, which the enemy had spared, was cruelly ravished by their pretended allies; yet some specious colours were not wanting to palliate, or justify, the violence of the Goths. The cities of Gaul, which they attacked, might perhaps be considered as in a state of rebellion against the government of Honorius: the articles of the treaty, or the secret instructions of the court, might sometimes be alleged in favour of the seeming usurpations of Adolphus; and the guilt of any irregular, unsuccessful act of hostility, might always be imputed, with an appearance of truth, to the ungovernable spirit of a Barbarian host, impatient of peace or discipline. The luxury of Italy had been less effectual to soften the temper, than to relax the courage, of the Goths; and they had imbibed the vices, without imitating the arts and institutions, of civilised society*.

The professions of Adolphus were probably sin-

His marriage with
Placidia,
A. D. 414.

* The retreat of the Goths from Italy, and their first transactions in Gaul, are dark and doubtful. I have derived much assistance from Mascou (Hist. of the ancient Germans, l. viii. c. 29. 35, 36, 37), who has illustrated, and connected, the broken chronicles and fragments of the times.

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cere, and his attachment to the cause of the republic, was secured by the ascendant which a Roman princess had acquired over the heart and understanding of the Barbarian king. Placidia*, the daughter of the great Theodosius, and of Galla, his second wife, had received a royal education in the palace of Constantinople; but the eventful story of her life is connected with the revolutions which agitated the Western empire under the reign of her brother Honorius. When Rome was first invested by the arms of Alaric, Placidia, who was then about twenty years of age, resided in the city; and her ready consent to the death of her cousin Serena has a cruel and ungrateful appearance, which, according to the circumstances of the action, may be aggravated, or excused, by the consideration of her tender age†. The victorious Barbarians detained, either as a hostage or a captive‡, the sister of Honorius; but, while she was exposed to the disgrace of following round Italy the motions of a Gothic camp, she experienced, however, a decent and respectful treatment. The authority of Jornandes, who praises the beauty of Placidia, may perhaps be counterbalanced by the silence, the expressive silence, of her flatterers: yet the splendour of her birth, the bloom of youth, the elegance of manners, and the dexterous insinuation which she condescended to employ, made a deep impression on the mind of Adolphus; and the Gothic king aspired to call himself the brother of the emperor. The ministers of Honorius rejected with disdain the proposal of an alliance, so injurious to every sentiment of Roman pride; and repeatedly

* See an account of Placidia in Ducange, *Fam. Byzant.* p. 72; and Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. i. p. 260. 386, &c. tom. vi. p. 240.

† Zosim. l. v. p. 350.

‡ Zosim. l. vi. p. 383. Orosius (l. vii. c. 40. p. 576), and the Chronicles of Marcellinus and Idatius, seem to suppose, that the Goths did not carry away Placidia till after the last siege of Rome.

urged the restitution of Placidia, as an indispensable condition of the treaty of peace. But the daughter of Theodosius submitted, without reluctance, to the desires of the conqueror, a young and valiant prince, who yielded to Alaric in loftiness of stature, but who excelled in the more attractive qualities of grace and beauty. The marriage of Adolphus and Placidia was consummated before the Goths retired from Italy; and the solemn, perhaps the anniversary, day of their nuptials was afterwards celebrated in the house of Ingenuus, one of the most illustrious citizens of Narbonne in Gaul. The bride, attired and adorned like a Roman empress, was placed on a throne of state; and the king of the Goths, who assumed, on this occasion, the Roman habit, contented himself with a less honourable seat by her side. The nuptial gift, which, according to the custom of his nation, was offered to Placidia, consisted of the rare and magnificent spoils of her country. Fifty beautiful youths, in silken robes, carried a basin in each hand; and one of these basins was filled with pieces of gold, the other with precious stones of an inestimable value. Attalus, so long the sport of fortune, and of the Goths, was appointed to lead the chorus of the Hymenæal song; and the degraded emperor might aspire to the praise of a skilful musician. The Barbarians enjoyed the insolence of their triumph; and the provincials rejoiced in this alliance, which tempered, by the mild influence of love and reason, the fierce spirit of their Gothic lord*.

The hundred basins of gold and gems, presented to Placidia at her nuptial feast, formed an inconsiderable portion of the Gothic treasures; of which

The Gothic
treasures.

* We owe the curious detail of this nuptial feast to the historian Olympiodorus, ap. Photium, p. 185. 188.

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some extraordinary specimens may be selected from the history of the successors of Adolphus. Many curious and costly ornaments of pure gold, enriched with jewels, were found in their palace of Narbonne, when it was pillaged, in the sixth century, by the Franks: sixty cups, or chalices; fifteen *patens*, or plates, for the use of the communion; twenty boxes, or cases, to hold the books of the gospels; this consecrated wealth was distributed by the son of Clovis among the churches of his dominions, and his pious liberality seems to upbraid some former sacrilege of the Goths. They possessed, with more security of conscience, the famous *missorium*, or great dish for the service of the table, of massy gold, of the weight of five hundred pounds, and of far superior value, from the precious stones, the exquisite workmanship, and the tradition, that it had been presented by Ætius the patrician, to Torismond king of the Goths. One of the successors of Torismond purchased the aid of the French monarch by the promise of this magnificent gift. When he was seated on the throne of Spain, he delivered it with reluctance to the ambassadors of Dagobert; despoiled them on the road; stipulated, after a long negotiation, the inadequate ransom of two hundred thousand pieces of gold; and preserved the *missorium*, as the pride of the Gothic treasury. When that treasury, after the conquest of Spain, was plundered by the Arabs, they admired, and they have celebrated, another object still more remarkable; a table of considerable size, of one single piece of solid emerald, encircled with three rows of fine pearls, supported by three hundred and sixty-five feet of gems and massy gold, and estimated at the price of five hundred thousand pieces of gold. Some portion of the Gothic treasures might be the gift of friendship, or the tribute of obedience: but

the far greater part had been the fruits of war and rapine, the spoils of the empire, and perhaps of Rome.

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After the deliverance of Italy from the oppression of the Goths, some secret counsellor was permitted, amidst the factions of the palace, to heal the wounds of that afflicted country*. By a wise and humane regulation, the eight provinces which had been the most deeply injured, Campania, Tuscany, Picenum, Samnium, Apulia, Calabria, Bruttium, and Lucania, obtained an indulgence of five years: the ordinary tribute was reduced to one-fifth, and even that fifth was destined to restore, and support, the useful institution of the public posts. By another law, the lands, which had been left without inhabitants or cultivation, were granted, with some diminution of taxes, to the neighbours who should occupy, or the strangers who should solicit them; and the new possessors were secured against the future claims of the fugitive proprietors. About the same time a general amnesty was published in the name of Honorius, to abolish the guilt and memory of all the *involuntary* offences, which had been committed by his unhappy subjects, during the term of the public disorder and calamity. A decent and respectful attention was paid to the restoration of the capital; the citizens were encouraged to rebuild the edifices which had been destroyed or damaged by hostile fire; and extraordinary supplies of corn were imported from the coast of Africa. The crowds that so lately fled before the sword of the Barbarians, were soon recalled by the hopes of plenty and pleasure; and Albinus, præfect of Rome, informed the court, with some anxiety and surprise, that, in a single day, he had

Laws for
the relief
of Italy
and Rome,
A. D. 410
—417.

* His three laws are inserted in the Theodosian Code, l. xi. tit. xxviii. leg. 7. L. xiii. tit. xi. leg. 12. L. xv. tit. xiv. leg. 14. The expressions of the last are very remarkable; since they contain not only a pardon, but an apology.

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the kinsmen of Honorius, he exhorted, from the court of Ravenna, with which he secretly corresponded, the ratification of his rebellious claims. Constantine engaged himself, by a solemn promise, to deliver Italy from the Goths ; advanced as far as the banks of the Po ; and after alarming, rather than assisting, his pusillanimous ally, hastily returned to the palace of Arles, to celebrate, with intemperate luxury, his vain and ostentatious triumph. But this transient prosperity was soon interrupted and destroyed by the revolt of count Gerontius, the bravest of his generals ; who, during the absence of his son Constans, a prince already invested with the Imperial purple, had been left to command in the provinces of Spain. For some reason, of which we are ignorant, Gerontius, instead of assuming the diadem, placed it on the head of his friend Maximus, who fixed his residence at Tarragona, while the active count pressed forwards, through the Pyrenees, to surprise the two emperors, Constantine and Constans, before they could prepare for their defence. The son was made prisoner at Vienna, and immediately put to death ; and the unfortunate youth had scarcely leisure to deplore the elevation of his family, which had tempted, or compelled him, sacrilegiously to desert the peaceful obscurity of the monastic life. The father maintained a siege within the walls of Arles ; but those walls must have yielded to the assailants, had not the city been unexpectedly relieved by the approach of an Italian army. The name of Honorius, the proclamation of a lawful emperor, astonished the contending parties of the rebels. Gerontius, abandoned by his own troops, escaped to the confines of Spain ; and rescued his name from oblivion, by the Roman courage which appeared to animate the last moments of his life. In the middle of the night, a great body of his perfidious soldiers surrounded and attacked his house, which he had

strongly barricaded. His wife, a valiant friend of the nation of the Alani, and some faithful slaves, were still attached to his person ; and he used, with so much skill and resolution, a large magazine of darts and arrows, that above three hundred of the assailants lost their lives in the attempt. His slaves, when all the missile weapons were spent, fled at the dawn of day ; and Gerontius, if he had not been restrained by conjugal tenderness, might have imitated their example ; till the soldiers, provoked by such obstinate resistance, applied fire on all sides to the house. In this fatal extremity, he complied with the request of his Barbarian friend, and cut off his head. The wife of Gerontius, who conjured him not to abandon her to a life of misery and disgrace, eagerly presented her neck to his sword ; and the tragic scene was terminated by the death of the count himself, who, after three ineffectual strokes, drew a short dagger, and sheathed it in his heart. The unprotected Maximus, whom he had invested with the purple, was indebted for his life to the contempt that was entertained of his power and abilities. The caprice of the Barbarians, who ravaged Spain, once more seated this Imperial phantom on the throne : but they soon resigned him to the justice of Honorius ; and the tyrant Maximus, after he had been shown to the people of Ravenna and Rome, was publicly executed.

The general, Constantius was his name, who raised by his approach the siege of Arles, and dissipated the troops of Gerontius, was born a Roman : and this remarkable distinction is strongly expressive of the decay of military spirit among the subjects of the empire. The strength and majesty which were conspicuous in the person of that general, marked him, in the popular opinion, as a candidate worthy of the throne, which he afterwards ascended. In the familiar intercourse of private life, his manners were cheerful

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and engaging: nor would he sometimes disdain, in the licence of convivial mirth, to vie with the pantomimes themselves, in the exercises of their ridiculous profession. But when the trumpet summoned him to arms; when he mounted his horse, and, bending down (for such was his singular practice) almost upon the neck, fiercely rolled his large animated eyes round the field, Constantius then struck terror into his foes, and inspired his soldiers with the assurance of victory. He had received from the court of Ravenna the important commission of extirpating rebellion in the provinces of the West; and the pretended emperor Constantine, after enjoying a short and anxious respite, was again besieged in his capital by the arms of a more formidable enemy. Yet this interval allowed time for a successful negotiation with the Franks and Alemanni; and his ambassador, Edobic, soon returned, at the head of an army, to disturb the operations of the siege of Arles. The Roman general, instead of expecting the attack in his lines, boldly, and perhaps wisely, resolved to pass the Rhone, and to meet the Barbarians. His measures were conducted with so much skill and secrecy, that, while they engaged the infantry of Constantius in the front, they were suddenly attacked, surrounded, and destroyed by the cavalry of his lieutenant Ulphilas, who had silently gained an advantageous post in their rear. The remains of the army of Edobic were preserved by flight or submission, and their leader escaped from the field of battle to the house of a faithless friend, who too clearly understood, that the head of his obnoxious guest would be an acceptable and lucrative present for the Imperial general. On this occasion, Constantius behaved with the magnanimity of a genuine Roman. Subduing, or suppressing, every sentiment of jealousy, he publicly acknowledged the merit and services of Ulphilas: but he

turned with horror from the assassin of Edobic ; and sternly intimated his commands, that the camp should no longer be polluted by the presence of an ungrateful wretch, who had violated the laws of friendship and hospitality. The usurper, who beheld, from the walls of Arles, the ruin of his last hopes, was tempted to place some confidence in so generous a conqueror. He required a solemn promise for his security ; and after receiving, by the imposition of hands, the sacred character of a Christian Presbyter, he ventured to open the gates of the city. But he soon experienced, that the principles of honour and integrity, which might regulate the ordinary conduct of Constantius, were superseded by the loose doctrines of political morality. The Roman general, indeed, refused to sully his laurels with the blood of Constantine ; but the abdicated emperor, and his son Julian, were sent under a strong guard into Italy ; and before they reached the palace of Ravenna, they met the ministers of death.

Death of
the usurper
Constantine,
A. D. 411,
Nov. 28.

At a time when it was universally confessed that almost every man in the empire was superior in personal merit to the princes whom the accident of their birth had seated on the throne, a rapid succession of usurpers, regardless of the fate of their predecessors, still continued to arise. This mischief was peculiarly felt in the provinces of Spain and Gaul, where the principles of order and obedience had been extinguished by war and rebellion. Before Constantine resigned the purple, and in the fourth month of the siege of Arles, intelligence was received in the Imperial camp, that Jovinus had assumed the diadem at Mentz, in the Upper Germany, at the instigation of Goar, king of the Alani, and of Guntiarus, king of the Burgundians ; and that the candidate, on whom they had bestowed the empire, advanced with a formidable host of Barbarians, from the banks of the

Fall of the
usurpers,
Jovinus,
Sebastian,
and Attalus,
A. D. 411
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Rhine to those of the Rhone. Every circumstance is dark and extraordinary in the short history of the reign of Jovinus. It was natural to expect, that a brave and skilful general, at the head of a victorious army, would have asserted in a field of battle, the justice of the cause of Honorius. The hasty retreat of Constantius might be justified by weighty reasons; but he resigned, without a struggle, the possession of Gaul: and Dardanus, the Prætorian præfect, is recorded as the only magistrate who refused to yield obedience to the usurper. When the Goths, two years after the siege of Rome, established their quarters in Gaul, it was natural to suppose that their inclination could be divided only between the emperor Honorius, with whom they had formed a recent alliance, and the degraded Attalus, whom they reserved in their camp for the occasional purpose of acting the part of a musician or a monarch. Yet in a moment of disgust (for which it is not easy to assign a cause, or a date), Adolphus connected himself with the usurper of Gaul; and imposed on Attalus the ignominious task of negotiating the treaty, which ratified his own disgrace. We are again surprised to read, that, instead of considering the Gothic alliance as the firmest support of his throne, Jovinus upbraided, in dark and ambiguous language, the officious importunity of Attalus; that, scorning the advice of his great ally, he invested with the purple his brother Sebastian; and that he most imprudently accepted the service of Sarus, when that gallant chief, the soldier of Honorius, was provoked to desert the court of a prince, who knew not how to reward, or punish. Adolphus, educated among a race of warriors, who esteemed the duty of revenge as the most precious and sacred portion of their inheritance, advanced with a body of ten thousand Goths to encounter the hereditary enemy of the house of Balti. He attacked

Sarus at an unguarded moment, when he was accompanied only by eighteen or twenty of his valiant followers. United by friendship, animated by despair, but at length oppressed by multitudes, this band of heroes deserved the esteem, without exciting the compassion, of their enemies; and the lion was no sooner taken in the toils, than he was instantly despatched. The death of Sarus dissolved the loose alliance which Adolphus still maintained with the usurpers of Gaul. He again listened to the dictates of love and prudence; and soon satisfied the brother of Placidia, by the assurance that he would immediately transmit, to the palace of Ravenna, the heads of the two tyrants, Jovinus and Sebastian. The king of the Goths executed his promise without difficulty or delay: the helpless brothers, unsupported by any personal merit, were abandoned by their Barbarian auxiliaries; and the short opposition of Valentia was expiated by the ruin of one of the noblest cities of Gaul. The emperor, chosen by the Roman senate, who had been promoted, degraded, insulted, restored, again degraded, and again insulted, was finally abandoned to his fate: but when the Gothic king withdrew his protection he was restrained, by pity or contempt, from offering any violence to the person of Attalus. The unfortunate Attalus, who was left without subjects or allies, embarked in one of the ports of Spain, in search of some secure and solitary retreat: but he was intercepted at sea, conducted to the presence of Honorius, led in triumph through the streets of Rome or Ravenna, and publicly exposed to the gazing multitude, on the second step of the throne of his *invincible* conqueror. The same measure of punishment with which, in the days of his prosperity, he was accused of menacing his rival, was inflicted on Attalus himself: he was condemned, after the amputation of two fingers, to a perpetual

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exile in the isle of Lipari, where he was supplied with the decent necessities of life. The remainder of the reign of Honorius was undisturbed by rebellion; and it may be observed, that, in the space of five years, seven usurpers had yielded to the fortune of a prince who was himself incapable either of counsel or of action.

Invasion of
Spain by
the Suevi,
Vandals,
Alani, &c.
A. D. 409,
Oct. 13.

The situation of Spain, separated, on all sides, from the enemies of Rome, by the sea, by the mountains, and by intermediate provinces, had secured the long tranquillity of that remote and sequestered country; and we may observe, as a sure symptom of domestic happiness, that in a period of four hundred years, Spain furnished very few materials to the history of the Roman empire. The footsteps of the Barbarians, who, in the reign of Gallienus, had penetrated beyond the Pyrenees, were soon obliterated by the return of peace; and in the fourth century of the Christian æra, the cities of Emerita, or Merida, of Corduba, Seville, Bracara, and Tarragona, were numbered with the most illustrious of the Roman world. The various plenty of the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms, was improved and manufactured by the skill of an industrious people; and the peculiar advantages of naval stores contributed to support an extensive and profitable trade*. The arts and sciences flourished under the protection of the emperors; and if the character of the Spaniards was enfeebled by peace and servitude, the hostile approach of the Germans, who had spread terror and desolation from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, seemed to rekindle some sparks of military ardour.

* Without recurring to the more ancient writers, I shall quote three respectable testimonies which belong to the fourth and seventh centuries; the *Expositio totius Mundi* (p. 16, in the third volume of Hudson's *Minor Geographers*), Ausonius (*de Claris Urbibus*, p. 242, edit. Toll.), and Isidore of Seville (*Præfat. ad Chron. ap. Grotium*, Hist. Goth. 707). Many particulars relative to the fertility and trade of Spain may be found in Nonnius, *Hispania Illustrata*, and in Huet, *Hist. du Commerce des Anciens*, c. 40, p. 228—234.

As long as the defence of the mountains was intrusted to the hardy and faithful militia of the country, they successfully repelled the frequent attempts of the Barbarians. But no sooner had the national troops been compelled to resign their post to the Honorian bands, in the service of Constantine, than the gates of Spain were treacherously betrayed to the public enemy, about ten months before the sack of Rome by the Goths*. The consciousness of guilt, and the thirst of rapine, prompted the mercenary guards of the Pyrenees to desert their station; to invite the arms of the Suevi, the Vandals, and the Alani; and to swell the torrent which was poured with irresistible violence from the frontiers of Gaul to the sea of Africa. The misfortunes of Spain may be described in the language of its most eloquent historian, who has concisely expressed the passionate, and perhaps exaggerated, declamations of contemporary writers. “The irruption of these nations was followed by the most dreadful calamities: as the Barbarians exercised their indiscriminate cruelty on the fortunes of the Romans and the Spaniards; and ravaged with equal fury the cities and the open country. The progress of famine reduced the miserable inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow-creatures; and even the wild beasts, who multiplied, without control, in the desert, were exasperated, by the taste of blood, and the impatience of hunger, boldly to attack and devour their human prey. Pestilence soon appeared, the inseparable companion of famine; a large proportion of the people was swept away; and the groans of the dying excited only the envy of their surviving friends. At length the Barbarians, satiated with

* The date is accurately fixed in the *Fasti*, and the *Chronicle of Idatius*. *Orosius* (l. vii. c. 40, p. 578), imputes the loss of Spain to the treachery of the Honorians; while *Sozomen* (l. ix. c. 12) accuses only their negligence.

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“ carnage and rapine, and afflicted by the contagious
 “ evils which they themselves had introduced, fixed
 “ their permanent seats in the depopulated country.
 “ The ancient Galicia, whose limits included the
 “ kingdom of Old Castille, was divided between the
 “ Suevi and the Vandals; the Alani were scattered
 “ over the provinces of Carthagera and Lusitania,
 “ from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean;
 “ and the fruitful territory of Bœtica was allotted to
 “ the Silingi, another branch of the Vandalic nation.
 “ After regulating this partition, the conquerors con-
 “ tracted with their new subjects some reciprocal en-
 “ gagements of protection and obedience: the lands
 “ were again cultivated; and the towns and villages
 “ were again occupied by a captive people. The
 “ greatest part of the Spaniards was even disposed to
 “ prefer this new condition of poverty and barbarism,
 “ to the severe oppressions of the Roman govern-
 “ ment; yet there were many who still asserted their
 “ native freedom, and who refused, more especially
 “ in the mountains of Galicia, to submit to the
 “ Barbarian yoke.”

Adolphus,
king of the
Goths,
marches
into Spain,
A. D. 414.

The important present of the heads of Jovinus and Sebastian had approved the friendship of Adolphus, and restored Gaul to the obedience of his brother Honorius. Peace was incompatible with the situation and temper of the king of the Goths. He readily accepted the proposal of turning his victorious arms against the Barbarians of Spain: the troops of Constantius intercepted his communication with the sea-ports of Gaul, and gently pressed his march towards the Pyrenees: he passed the mountains, and surprised, in the name of the emperor, the city of Barcelona. The fondness of Adolphus for his Roman bride was not abated by time or possession; and the birth of a son, surnamed, from his illustrious grand-sire, Theodosius, appeared to fix him for ever in the

interest of the republic. The loss of that infant, whose remains were deposited in a silver coffin in one of the churches near Barcelona, afflicted his parents; but the grief of the Gothic king was suspended by the labours of the field; and the course of his victories was soon interrupted by domestic treason. He had imprudently received into his service one of the followers of Sarus, a Barbarian of a daring spirit, but of a diminutive stature, whose secret desire of revenging the death of his beloved patron was continually irritated by the sarcasms of his insolent master. Adolphus was assassinated in the palace of Barcelona; the laws of the succession were violated by a tumultuous faction; and a stranger to the royal race, Singeric, the brother of Sarus himself, was seated on the Gothic throne. The first act of his reign was the inhuman murder of the six children of Adolphus, the issue of a former marriage, whom he tore, without pity, from the feeble arms of a venerable bishop. The unfortunate Placidia, instead of the respectful compassion which she might have excited in the most savage breasts, was treated with cruel and wanton insult. The daughter of the emperor Theodosius, confounded among a crowd of vulgar captives, was compelled to march on foot above twelve miles, before the horse of a Barbarian, the assassin of a husband whom Placidia loved and lamented.

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His death,
A. D. 415,
August.

But Placidia soon obtained the pleasure of revenge; and the view of her ignominious sufferings might rouse an indignant people against the tyrant, who was assassinated on the seventh day of his usurpation. After the death of Singeric, the free choice of the nation bestowed the Gothic sceptre on Wallia, whose warlike and ambitious temper appeared, in the beginning of his reign, extremely hostile to the republic. He marched in arms, from Barcelona to the

The Goths
conquer and
restore
Spain.
A. D. 415
—418.

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shores of the Atlantic Ocean, which the ancients revered and dreaded as the boundary of the world. But when he reached the southern promontory of Spain, and, from the rock now covered by the fortress of Gibraltar, contemplated the neighbouring and fertile coast of Africa, Wallia resumed the designs of conquest, which had been interrupted by the death of Alaric. The winds and waves again disappointed the enterprise of the Goths; and the minds of a superstitious people were deeply affected by the repeated disasters of storms and shipwrecks. In this disposition, the successor of Adolphus no longer refused to listen to a Roman ambassador, whose proposals were enforced by the real, or supposed, approach of a numerous army, under the conduct of the brave Constantius. A solemn treaty was stipulated and observed: Placidia was honourably restored to her brother; six hundred thousand measures of wheat were delivered to the hungry Goths; and Wallia engaged to draw his sword in the service of the empire. A bloody war was instantly excited among the Barbarians of Spain; and the contending princes are said to have addressed their letters, their ambassadors, and their hostages, to the throne of the Western emperor, exhorting him to remain a tranquil spectator of their contest; the events of which must be favourable to the Romans, by the mutual slaughter of their common enemies. The Spanish war was obstinately supported, during three campaigns, with desperate valour, and various success; and the martial achievements of Wallia diffused through the empire the superior renown of the Gothic hero. He exterminated the Silingi, who had irretrievably ruined the elegant plenty of the province of Bœtica. He slew, in battle, the king of the Alani; and the remains of those Scythian wanderers, who escaped from the field, instead of choosing a new leader, humbly

sought a refuge under the standard of the Vandals, with whom they were ever afterwards confounded. The Vandals themselves, and the Suevi, yielded to the efforts of the invincible Goths. The promiscuous multitude of Barbarians, whose retreat had been intercepted, were driven into the mountains of Galicia; where they still continued, in a narrow compass, and on a barren soil, to exercise their domestic and implacable hostilities. In the pride of victory, Wallia was faithful to his engagements: he restored his Spanish conquests to the obedience of Honorius; and the tyranny of the Imperial officers soon reduced an oppressed people to regret the time of their Barbarian servitude. While the event of the war was still doubtful, the first advantages obtained by the arms of Wallia had encouraged the court of Ravenna to decree the honours of a triumph to their feeble sovereign. He entered Rome like the ancient conquerors of nations; and if the monuments of servile corruption had not long since met with the fate which they deserved, we should probably find that a crowd of poets and orators applauded the fortune, the wisdom, and the invincible courage, of the emperor Honorius.

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Such a triumph might have been justly claimed by the ally of Rome, if Wallia, before he repassed the Pyrenees, had extirpated the seeds of the Spanish war. His victorious Goths, forty-three years after they had passed the Danube, were established, according to the faith of treaties, in the possession of the second Aquitaine; a maritime province between the Garonne and the Loire, under the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Bourdeaux. That metropolis, advantageously situated for the trade of the ocean, was built in a regular and elegant form; and its numerous inhabitants were distinguished among

Their establishment in Aquitain, A. D. 419.

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The Bur-
gundians.

the Gauls by their wealth, their learning, and the politeness of their manners. The adjacent province, which has been fondly compared to the garden of Eden, is blessed with a fruitful soil, and a temperate climate: the face of the country displayed the arts and the rewards of industry; and the Goths, after their martial toils, luxuriously exhausted the rich vineyards of Aquitain. The Gothic limits were enlarged by the additional gift of some neighbouring dioceses; and the successors of Alaric fixed their royal residence at Thoulouse, which included five populous quarters, or cities, within the spacious circuit of its walls. About the same time, in the last years of the reign of Honorius, the GOTHs, the BURGUNDIANS, and the FRANKS, obtained a permanent seat and dominion in the provinces of Gaul. The liberal grant of the usurper Jovinus to his Burgundian allies was confirmed by the lawful emperor; the lands of the First, or Upper Germany, were ceded to those formidable Barbarians; and they gradually occupied, either by conquest or treaty, the two provinces which still retain, with the titles of *Duchy* and of *County*, the national appellation of Burgundy. The Franks, the valiant and faithful allies of the Roman republic, were soon tempted to imitate the invaders, whom they had so bravely resisted. Treves, the capital of Gaul, was pillaged by their lawless bands; and the humble colony, which they so long maintained in the district of Toxandria, in Brabant, insensibly multiplied along the banks of the Meuse and Scheld, till their independent power filled the whole extent of the Second, or Lower Germany. These facts may be sufficiently justified by historic evidence; but the foundation of the French monarchy by Pharamond, the conquests, the laws, and even the existence, of that hero, have been

justly arraigned by the impartial severity of modern criticism *.

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The ruin of the opulent provinces of Gaul may be dated from the establishment of these Barbarians, whose alliance was dangerous and oppressive, and who were capriciously impelled, by interest or passion, to violate the public peace. A heavy and partial ransom was imposed on the surviving provincials, who had escaped the calamities of war; the fairest and most fertile lands were assigned to the rapacious strangers, for the use of their families, their slaves, and their cattle; and the trembling natives relinquished with a sigh the inheritance of their fathers. Yet these domestic misfortunes, which are seldom the lot of a vanquished people, had been felt and inflicted by the Romans themselves, not only in the insolence of foreign conquest, but in the madness of civil discord. The Triumvirs proscribed eighteen of the most flourishing colonies of Italy; and distributed their lands and houses to the veterans who revenged the death of Cæsar, and oppressed the liberty of their country. Two poets, of unequal fame, have deplored, in similar circumstances, the loss of their patrimony; but the legionaries of Augustus appear to have surpassed, in violence and injustice, the Barbarians, who invaded Gaul, under the reign of Honorius. It was not without the utmost difficulty that Virgil escaped from the sword of the centurion, who had usurped his farm in the neighbourhood of Mantua; but Paulinus of Bourdeaux received a sum of money from his Gothic purchaser, which he accepted with pleasure and surprise; and, though it was much inferior to the real value of his

State of the
Barbarians
in Gaul,
A. D. 420,
&c.

* See Mascou, l. viii. c. 43, 44, 45. Except in a short and suspicious line of the Chronicle of Prosper (in tom. i. p. 638), the name of Pharamond is never mentioned before the seventh century. The author of the *Gesta Francorum* (in tom. ii. p. 543) suggests, probably enough, that the choice of Pharamond, or at least of a king, was recommended to the Franks by his father Marcomir, who was an exile in Tuscan.

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estate, this act of rapine was disguised by some colours of moderation and equity. The odious name of conquerors was softened into the mild and friendly appellation of the *guests* of the Romans; and the Barbarians of Gaul, more especially the Goths, repeatedly declared, that they were bound to the people by the ties of hospitality, and to the emperor by the duty of allegiance and military service. The title of Honorius and his successors, their laws, and their civil magistrates, were still respected in the provinces of Gaul, of which they had resigned the possession to the Barbarian allies; and the kings, who exercised a supreme and independent authority over their native subjects, ambitiously solicited the more honourable rank of master-generals of the Imperial armies. Such was the involuntary reverence which the Roman name still impressed on the minds of those warriors, who had borne away in triumph the spoils of the Capitol.

Revolt of
Britain and
Armorica,
A. D. 409.

Whilst Italy was ravaged by the Goths, and a succession of feeble tyrants oppressed the provinces beyond the Alps, the British island separated itself from the body of the Roman empire. The regular forces, which guarded that remote province, had been gradually withdrawn; and Britain was abandoned, without defence, to the Saxon pirates, and the savages of Ireland and Caledonia. The Britons, reduced to this extremity, no longer relied on the tardy and doubtful aid of a declining monarchy. They assembled in arms, repelled the invaders, and rejoiced in the important discovery of their own strength. Afflicted by similar calamities, and actuated by the same spirit, the Armorican provinces (a name which comprehended the maritime countries of Gaul between the Seine and the Loire) resolved to imitate the example of the neighbouring island. They expelled the Roman magistrates, who acted under the

authority of the usurper Constantine; and a free government was established among a people who had so long been subject to the arbitrary will of a master. The independence of Britain and Armorica was soon confirmed by Honorius himself, the lawful emperor of the West; and the letters, by which he committed to the new states the care of their own safety, might be interpreted as an absolute and perpetual abdication of the exercise and rights of sovereignty. This interpretation was, in some measure, justified by the event. After the usurpers of Gaul had successively fallen, the maritime provinces were restored to the empire. Yet their obedience was imperfect and precarious: the vain, inconstant, rebellious disposition of the people, was incompatible either with freedom or servitude; and Armorica, though it could not long maintain the form of a republic, was agitated by frequent and destructive revolts. Britain was irrecoverably lost*. But as the emperors wisely acquiesced in the independence of a remote province, the separation was not embittered by the reproach of tyranny or rebellion; and the claims of allegiance and protection were succeeded by the mutual and voluntary offices of national friendship†.

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This revolution dissolved the artificial fabric of civil and military government, and the independent country, during a period of forty years, till the descent of the Saxons, was ruled by the authority of the clergy, the nobles, and the municipal towns‡.

State of
Britain,
A. D. 409
—449.

* Βρεταννίαν μὲν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοι ἀναρρωσασθαι ἔνεστι γυγν, are the words of Procopius (de Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 2. p. 181, Louvre edition) in a very important passage, which has been too much neglected. Even Bede (Hist. Gent. Anglican. l. i. c. 12. p. 50, edit. Smith) acknowledges that the Romans finally left Britain in the reign of Honorius. Yet our modern historians and antiquaries extend the term of their dominion; and there are some who allow only the interval of a few months between their departure and the arrival of the Saxons.

† Bede has not forgot the occasional aid of the legions against the Scots and Picts; and more authentic proof will hereafter be produced, that the Independent Britons raised 12,000 men for the service of the emperor Anthemius, in Gaul.

‡ I owe it to myself, and to historic truth, to declare, that some circumstances in this paragraph are founded only on conjecture and analogy. The stubborn-

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I. Zosimus, who alone has preserved the memory of this singular transaction, very accurately observes, that the letters of Honorius were addressed to the *cities* of Britain *. Under the protection of the Romans, ninety-two considerable towns had arisen in the several parts of that great province; and, among these, thirty-three cities were distinguished above the rest by their superior privileges and importance †. Each of these cities, as in all the other provinces of the empire, formed a legal corporation, for the purpose of regulating their domestic policy; and the powers of municipal government were distributed among annual magistrates, a select senate, and the assembly of the people, according to the original model of the Roman constitution ‡. The management of a common revenue, the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction, and the habits of public counsel and command, were inherent to these petty republics; and when they asserted their independence, the youth of the city, and of the adjacent districts, would naturally range themselves under the standard of the magistrate. But the desire of obtaining the advantages, and of escaping the burthens, of a political society, is a perpetual and inexhaustible source of discord; nor can it reasonably be presumed, that the restoration of British freedom was exempt from tumult and faction. The pre-eminence of birth and fortune must have been frequently violated by bold and popular citizens; and the haughty nobles, who complained that they were become the subjects of their own servants, would sometimes regret the reign

ness of our language has sometimes forced me to deviate from the *conditional* into the *indicative* mood.

* *Προς τας ἐν Βρεταννίᾳ πόλεις.* Zosimus, l. vi. p. 383.

† Two cities of Britain were *municipia*, nine *colonies*, ten *Latii jure donatæ*, twelve *stipendiariæ* of eminent note. This detail is taken from Richard of Cirencester, *de Situ Britannia*, p. 36; and though it may not seem probable, that he wrote from the MSS. of a Roman general, he shows a genuine knowledge of antiquity, very extraordinary for a monk of the fourteenth century.

‡ See Maffei *Verona Illustrata*, part i. l. v. p. 83—106.

of an arbitrary monarch. II. The jurisdiction of each city over the adjacent country was supported by the patrimonial influence of the principal senators; and the smaller towns, the villages, and the proprietors of land, consulted their own safety by adhering to the shelter of these rising republics. The sphere of their attraction was proportioned to the respective degrees of their wealth and populousness; but the hereditary lords of ample possessions, who were not oppressed by the neighbourhood of any powerful city, aspired to the rank of independent princes, and boldly exercised the rights of peace and war. The gardens and villas, which exhibited some faint imitation of Italian elegance, would soon be converted into strong castles, the refuge, in time of danger, of the adjacent country: the produce of the land was applied to purchase arms and horses; to maintain a military force of slaves, of peasants, and of licentious followers; and the chieftain might assume, within his own domain, the powers of a civil magistrate. Several of these British chiefs might be the genuine posterity of ancient kings; and many more would be tempted to adopt this honourable genealogy, and to vindicate their hereditary claims, which had been suspended by the usurpation of the Cæsars. Their situation, and their hopes, would dispose them to affect the dress, the language, and the customs of their ancestors. If the *princes* of Britain relapsed into barbarism, while the *cities* studiously preserved the laws and manners of Rome, the whole island must have been gradually divided by the distinction of two national parties; again broken into a thousand subdivisions of war and faction, by the various provocations of interest and resentment. The public strength, instead of being united against a foreign enemy, was consumed in obscure and intestine quarrels; and the personal

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merit which had placed a successful leader at the head of his equals, might enable him to subdue the freedom of some neighbouring cities; and to claim a rank among the *tyrants*, who infested Britain after the dissolution of the Roman government. III. The British church might be composed of thirty or forty bishops, with an adequate proportion of the inferior clergy; and the want of riches (for they seem to have been poor) would compel them to deserve the public esteem, by a decent and exemplary behaviour. The interest, as well as the temper, of the clergy, was favourable to the peace and union of their distracted country; those salutary lessons might be frequently inculcated in their popular discourses; and the episcopal synods were the only councils that could pretend to the weight and authority of a national assembly. In such councils, where the princes and magistrates sat promiscuously with the bishops, the important affairs of the state, as well as of the church, might be freely debated; differences reconciled, alliances formed, contributions imposed, wise resolutions often concerted, and sometimes executed; and there is reason to believe, that, in moments of extreme danger, a *Pendragon*, or Dictator, was elected by the general consent of the Britons. These pastoral cares, so worthy of the episcopal character, were interrupted, however, and the British clergy incessantly laboured to eradicate the Pelagian heresy, which they abhorred, as the peculiar disgrace of their native country.

Assembly
of the seven
provinces
of Gaul,
A. D. 418.

It is somewhat remarkable, or rather it is extremely natural, that the revolt of Britain and Armorica should have introduced an appearance of liberty into the obedient provinces of Gaul. In a solemn edict, filled with the strongest assurances of that paternal affection which princes so often express, and so seldom feel, the emperor Honorius promul-

gated his intention of convening an annual assembly of the *seven provinces* : a name peculiarly appropriated to Aquitain, and the ancient Narbonnese, which had long since exchanged their Celtic rudeness for the useful and elegant arts of Italy. Arles, the seat of government and commerce, was appointed for the place of the assembly ; which regularly continued twenty-eight days, from the fifteenth of August to the thirteenth of September, of every year. It consisted of the Prætorian præfect of the Gauls ; of seven provincial governors, one consular and six presidents ; of the magistrates, and perhaps the bishops, of about sixty cities ; and of a competent, though indefinite, number of the most honourable and opulent *possessors* of land, who might justly be considered as the representatives of their country. They were empowered to interpret and communicate the laws of their sovereign ; to expose the grievances and wishes of their constituents ; to moderate the excessive or unequal weight of taxes ; and to deliberate on every subject of local or national importance, that could tend to the restoration of the peace and prosperity of the seven provinces. If such an institution, which gave the people an interest in their own government, had been universally established by Trajan or the Antonines, the seeds of public wisdom and virtue might have been cherished and propagated in the empire of Rome. The privileges of the subject would have secured the throne of the monarch ; the abuses of an arbitrary administration might have been prevented, in some degree, or corrected, by the interposition of these representative assemblies ; and the country would have been defended against a foreign enemy by the arms of natives and freemen. Under the mild and generous influence of liberty, the Roman empire might have remained invincible and immortal ; or if

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its excessive magnitude, and the instability of human affairs, had opposed such perpetual continuance, its vital and constituent members might have separately preserved their vigour and independence. But in the decline of the empire, when every principle of health and life had been exhausted, the tardy application of this partial remedy was incapable of producing any important or salutary effects. The emperor Honorius expresses his surprise, that he must compel the reluctant provinces to accept a privilege which they should ardently have solicited. A fine of three, or even five, pounds of gold, was imposed on the absent representatives; who seem to have declined this imaginary gift of a free constitution, as the last and most cruel insult of their oppressors.

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Arcadius Emperor of the East.—Administration and Disgrace of Eutropius.—Revolt of Gainas.—Persecution of St. John Chrysostom.—Theodosius II. Emperor of the East.—His Sister Pulcheria.—His Wife Eudocia.—The Persian War, and Division of Armenia.

THE division of the Roman world between the sons of Theodosius marks the final establishment of the empire of the East, which, from the reign of Arcadius to the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, subsisted one thousand and fifty-eight years, in a state of premature and perpetual decay. The sovereign of that empire assumed, and obstinately detained, the vain, and at length fictitious, title of Emperor of the ROMANS; and the hereditary appellations of CÆSAR and AUGUSTUS continued to declare that he was the legitimate successor of the first of men, who had reigned over the first of nations. The palace of Constantinople rivalled, and perhaps excelled, the magnificence of Persia; and the eloquent sermons of St. Chrysostom celebrate, while they condemn, the pompous luxury of the reign of Arcadius. “The emperor,” says he, “wears on his head either a diadem, or a crown of gold, decorated with precious stones of inestimable value. These ornaments, and his purple garments, are reserved for his sacred person alone; and his robes of silk are embroidered with the figures of golden dragons. His throne is of massy gold. Whenever he appears in public, he is surrounded by his courtiers, his guards, and his attendants. Their spears, their shields, their cuirasses, the bridles and trappings of their horses, have either the substance, or

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The empire
of the East,
A. D. 395
—1453.
Reign of
Arcadius,
A. D. 395
—408.

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“ the appearance, of gold ; and the large splendid
“ boss in the midst of their shield is encircled with
“ smaller bosses, which represent the shape of the
“ human eye. The two mules that draw the chariot
“ of the monarch are perfectly white, and shining
“ all over with gold. The chariot itself, of pure
“ and solid gold, attracts the admiration of the spec-
“ tators, who contemplate the purple curtains, the
“ snowy carpet, the size of the precious stones, and
“ the resplendent plates of gold, that glitter as they
“ are agitated by the motion of the carriage. The
“ Imperial pictures are white, on a blue ground ;
“ the emperor appears seated on his throne, with his
“ arms, his horses, and his guards beside him ; and
“ his vanquished enemies in chains at his feet.” The
successors of Constantine established their perpetual
residence in the royal city, which he had erected on
the verge of Europe and Asia. Inaccessible to the
menaces of their enemies, and perhaps to the com-
plaints of their people, they received, with each wind,
the tributary productions of every climate ; while
the impregnable strength of their capital continued
for ages to defy the hostile attempts of the Bar-
barians. Their dominions were bounded by the
Hadriatic and the Tigris ; and the whole interval
of twenty-five days’ navigation, which separated the
extreme cold of Scythia from the torrid zone of
Æthiopia, was comprehended within the limits of
the empire of the East. The populous countries of
that empire were the seat of art and learning, of
luxury and wealth ; and the inhabitants, who had
assumed the language and manners of Greeks, styled
themselves, with some appearance of truth, the most
enlightened and civilized portion of the human spe-
cies. The form of government was a pure and simple
monarchy ; the name of the ROMAN REPUBLIC,
which so long preserved a faint tradition of freedom,

was confined to the Latin provinces ; and the princes of Constantinople measured their greatness by the servile obedience of their people. They were ignorant how much this passive disposition enervates and degrades every faculty of the mind. The subjects, who had resigned their will to the absolute commands of a master, were equally incapable of guarding their lives and fortunes against the assaults of the Barbarians, or of defending their reason from the terrors of superstition.

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The first events of the reign of Arcadius and Honorius are so intimately connected, that the rebellion of the Goths, and the fall of Rufinus, have already claimed a place in the history of the West. It has already been observed, that Eutropius, one of the principal eunuchs of the palace of Constantinople, succeeded the haughty minister whose ruin he had accomplished, and whose vices he soon imitated. Every order of the state bowed to the new favourite ; and their tame and obsequious submission encouraged him to insult the laws, and, what is still more difficult and dangerous, the manners of his country. Under the weakest of the predecessors of Arcadius, the reign of the eunuchs had been secret and almost invisible. They insinuated themselves into the confidence of the prince ; but their ostensible functions were confined to the menial service of the wardrobe and Imperial bed-chamber. They might direct, in a whisper, the public counsels, and blast, by their malicious suggestions, the fame and fortunes of the most illustrious citizens ; but they never presumed to stand forward in the front of empire, or to profane the public honours of the state. Eutropius was the first of his artificial sex, who dared to assume the character of a Roman magistrate and general. Sometimes, in the presence of the blushing senate, he ascended the tribunal, to pronounce judgment, or to

Admini-
stration and
character of
Eutropius,
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repeat elaborate harangues ; and sometimes appeared on horseback, at the head of his troops, in the dress and armour of a hero. The disregard of custom and decency always betrays a weak and ill-regulated mind ; nor does Eutropius seem to have compensated for the folly of the design, by any superior merit or ability in the execution. His former habits of life had not introduced him to the study of the laws, or the exercises of the field ; his awkward and unsuccessful attempts provoked the secret contempt of the spectators ; the Goths expressed their wish, that *such* a general might always command the armies of Rome ; and the name of the minister was branded with ridicule, more pernicious perhaps than hatred, to a public character. While disgraceful stories were circulated, and perhaps exaggerated, in private conversations, the vanity of the favourite was flattered with the most extraordinary honours. In the senate, in the capital, in the provinces, the statues of Eutropius were erected, in brass, or marble, decorated with the symbols of his civil and military virtues, and inscribed with the pompous title of the third founder of Constantinople. He was promoted to the rank of *patrician*, which began to signify, in a popular, and even legal acceptance, the father of the emperor ; and the last year of the fourth century was polluted by the *consulship* of an eunuch, and a slave. This strange and inexpiable prodigy awakened, however, the prejudices of the Romans. The effeminate consul was rejected by the West, as an indelible stain to the annals of the republic ; and, without invoking the shades of Brutus and Camillus, the colleague of Eutropius, a learned and respectable magistrate, sufficiently represented the different maxims of the two administrations.

His venality
and injustice.

The bold and vigorous mind of Rufinus seems to have been actuated by a more sanguinary and re-

vengeful spirit ; but the avarice of the eunuch was not less insatiate than that of the præfect. As long as he despoiled the oppressors, who had enriched themselves with the plunder of the people, Eutropius might gratify his covetous disposition without much envy or injustice : but the progress of his rapine soon invaded the wealth which had been acquired by lawful inheritance, or laudable industry. The usual methods of extortion were practised and improved ; and Claudian has sketched a lively and original picture of the public auction of the state. “ The impotence of the eunuch,” says that agreeable satirist, “ has served only to stimulate his avarice ; the same hand which, in his servile condition, was exercised in petty thefts, to unlock the coffers of his master, now grasps the riches of the world ; and this infamous broker of the empire appreciates and divides the Roman provinces, from Mount Hæmus to the Tigris. One man, at the expense of his villa, is made proconsul of Asia ; a second purchases Syria with his wife’s jewels ; and a third laments, that he has exchanged his paternal estate for the government of Bithynia. In the antechamber of Eutropius a large tablet is exposed to public view, which marks the respective prices of the provinces. The different value of Pontus, of Galatia, of Lydia, is accurately distinguished. Lycia may be obtained for so many thousand pieces of gold ; but the opulence of Phrygia will require a more considerable sum. The eunuch wishes to obliterate, by the general disgrace, his personal ignominy ; and as he has been sold himself, he is desirous of selling the rest of mankind. In the eager contention, the balance, which contains the fate and fortunes of the province, often trembles on the beam ; and till one of the scales is inclined, by a superior weight, the mind of the impartial judge remains

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Ruin of
Abundan-
tius;

of Tima-
sius.

“in anxious suspense. Such,” continues the indignant poet, “are the fruits of Roman valour, of the defeat of Antiochus, and of the triumph of Pompey.” This venal prostitution of public honours secured the impunity of *future* crimes; but the riches, which Eutropius derived from confiscation, were *already* stained with injustice; since it was decent to accuse, and to condemn, the proprietors of the wealth which he was impatient to confiscate. Some noble blood was shed by the hand of the executioner; and the most inhospitable extremities of the empire were filled with innocent and illustrious exiles. Among the generals and consuls of the East, Abundantius had reason to dread the first effects of the resentment of Eutropius. He had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of introducing that abject slave to the palace of Constantinople: and some degree of praise must be allowed to a powerful and ungrateful favourite, who was satisfied with the disgrace of his benefactor. Abundantius was stripped of his ample fortunes by an Imperial rescript, and banished to Pityus, on the Euxine, the last frontier of the Roman world; where he subsisted by the precarious mercy of the Barbarians, till he could obtain, after the fall of Eutropius, a milder exile at Sidon in Phœnicia. The destruction of Timasius required a more serious and regular mode of attack. That great officer, the master-general of the armies of Theodosius, had signalized his valour by a decisive victory, which he obtained over the Goths of Thessaly; but he was too prone, after the example of his sovereign, to enjoy the luxury of peace, and to abandon his confidence to wicked and designing flatterers. Timasius had despised the public clamour, by promoting an infamous dependent to the command of a cohort; and he deserved to feel the ingratitude of Bargus, who was secretly instigated

by the favourite to accuse his patron of a treasonable conspiracy. The general was arraigned before the tribunal of Arcadius himself; and the principal eunuch stood by the side of the throne to suggest the questions and answers of his sovereign. But as this form of trial might be deemed partial and arbitrary, the further inquiry into the crimes of Timasius was delegated to Saturninus and Procopius; the former of consular rank, the latter still respected as the father-in-law of the emperor Valens. The appearances of a fair and legal proceeding were maintained by the blunt honesty of Procopius; and he yielded with reluctance to the obsequious dexterity of his colleague, who pronounced a sentence of condemnation against the unfortunate Timasius. His immense riches were confiscated, in the name of the emperor, and for the benefit of the favourite; and he was doomed to perpetual exile at Oasis, a solitary spot in the midst of the sandy deserts of Libya. Secluded from all human converse, the master-general of the Roman armies was lost for ever to the world; but the circumstances of his fate have been related in a various and contradictory manner. It is insinuated, that Eutropius despatched a private order for his secret execution. It was reported, that, in attempting to escape from Oasis, he perished in the desert, of thirst and hunger; and that his dead body was found on the sands of Libya. It has been asserted, with more confidence, that his son Syagrius, after successfully eluding the pursuit of the agents and emissaries of the court, collected a band of African robbers; that he rescued Timasius from the place of his exile; and that both the father and son disappeared from the knowledge of mankind. But the ungrateful Bargus, instead of being suffered to possess the reward of guilt, was soon afterwards

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A cruel and
unjust law
of treason,
A. D. 397,
Sept. 4.

circumvented and destroyed, by the more powerful villany of the minister himself; who retained sense and spirit enough to abhor the instrument of his own crimes.

The public hatred, and the despair of individuals, continually threatened, or seemed to threaten, the personal safety of Eutropius; as well as of the numerous adherents who were attached to his fortune, and had been promoted by his venal favour. For their mutual defence, he contrived the safeguard of a law, which violated every principle of humanity and justice. I. It is enacted, in the name, and by the authority, of Arcadius, that all those who shall conspire, either with subjects, or with strangers, against the lives of any of the persons whom the emperor considers as the members of his own body, shall be punished with death and confiscation. This species of fictitious and metaphorical treason is extended to protect, not only the *illustrious* officers of the state and army, who are admitted into the sacred consistory, but likewise the principal domestics of the palace, the senators of Constantinople, the military commanders, and the civil magistrates of the provinces: a vague and indefinite list, which, under the successors of Constantine, included an obscure and numerous train of subordinate ministers. II. This extreme severity might perhaps be justified, had it been only directed to secure the representatives of the sovereign from any actual violence in the execution of their office. But the whole body of Imperial dependents claimed a privilege, or rather impunity, which screened them, in the loosest moments of their lives, from the hasty, perhaps the justifiable, resentment of their fellow-citizens: and, by a strange perversion of the laws, the same degree of guilt and punishment was applied to a private quarrel, and to a deliberate conspiracy against the emperor and the

empire. The edict of Arcadius most positively and most absurdly declares, that in such cases of treason, *thoughts* and *actions* ought to be punished with equal severity; that the knowledge of a mischievous intention, unless it be instantly revealed, becomes equally criminal with the intention itself; and that those rash men, who shall presume to solicit the pardon of traitors, shall themselves be branded with public and perpetual infamy. III. "With regard to the sons of the traitors," continues the emperor, "although they ought to share the punishment, since they will probably imitate the guilt, of their parents; yet, by the special effect of our Imperial lenity, we grant them their lives: but, at the same time, we declare them incapable of inheriting, either on the father's or on the mother's side, or of receiving any gift or legacy, from the testament either of kinsmen or of strangers. Stigmatised with hereditary infamy, excluded from the hopes of honours or fortune, let them endure the pangs of poverty and contempt, till they shall consider life as a calamity, and death as a comfort and relief." In such words, so well adapted to insult the feelings of mankind, did the emperor, or rather his favourite eunuch, applaud the moderation of a law, which transferred the same unjust and inhuman penalties to the children of all those who had seconded, or who had not disclosed, these fictitious conspiracies. Some of the noblest regulations of Roman jurisprudence have been suffered to expire; but this edict, a convenient and forcible engine of ministerial tyranny, was carefully inserted in the codes of Theodosius and Justinian; and the same maxims have been revived in modern ages, to protect the electors of Germany, and the cardinals of the church of Rome.

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Rebellion of
Tribigild,
A. D. 399.

Yet these sanguinary laws, which spread terror among a disarmed and dispirited people, were of too weak a texture to restrain the bold enterprise of Tribigild the Ostrogoth. The colony of that warlike nation, which had been planted by Theodosius in one of the most fertile districts of Phrygia, impatiently compared the slow returns of laborious husbandry with the successful rapine and liberal rewards of Alaric; and their leader resented, as a personal affront, his own ungracious reception in the palace of Constantinople. A soft and wealthy province, in the heart of the empire, was astonished by the sound of war; and the faithful vassal, who had been disregarded or oppressed, was again respected, as soon as he resumed the hostile character of a Barbarian. The vineyards and fruitful fields, between the rapid Marsyas and the winding Mæander, were consumed with fire; the decayed walls of the city crumbled into dust, at the first stroke of an enemy; the trembling inhabitants escaped from a bloody massacre to the shores of the Hellespont; and a considerable part of Asia Minor was desolated by the rebellion of Tribigild. His rapid progress was checked by the resistance of the peasants of Pamphylia; and the Ostrogoths, attacked in a narrow pass, between the city of Selgæ, a deep morass, and the craggy cliffs of Mount Taurus, were defeated with the loss of their bravest troops. But the spirit of their chief was not daunted by misfortune; and his army was continually recruited by swarms of Barbarians and outlaws, who were desirous of exercising the profession of robbery, under the more honourable names of war and conquest. The rumours of the success of Tribigild might for some time be suppressed by fear, or disguised by flattery; yet they gradually alarmed both the court and the capital. Every misfortune was

exaggerated in dark and doubtful hints; and the future designs of the rebels became the subject of anxious conjecture. Whenever Tribigild advanced into the inland country, the Romans were inclined to suppose that he meditated the passage of Mount Taurus, and the invasion of Syria. If he descended towards the sea, they imputed, and perhaps suggested, to the Gothic chief, the more dangerous project of arming a fleet in the harbours of Ionia, and of extending his depredations along the maritime coast, from the mouth of the Nile to the port of Constantinople. The approach of danger, and the obstinacy of Tribigild, who refused all terms of accommodation, compelled Eutropius to summon a council of war. After claiming for himself the privilege of a veteran soldier, the eunuch intrusted the guard of Thrace and the Hellespont to Gainas the Goth, and the command of the Asiatic army to his favourite Leo; two generals, who differently, but effectually, promoted the cause of the rebels. Leo, who, from the bulk of his body, and the dulness of his mind, was surnamed the Ajax of the East, had deserted his original trade, of a woolcomber, to exercise, with much less skill and success, the military profession; and his uncertain operations were capriciously framed and executed, with an ignorance of real difficulties, and a timorous neglect of every favourable opportunity. The rashness of the Ostrogoths had drawn them into a disadvantageous position between the rivers Melas and Eurymedon, where they were almost besieged by the peasants of Pamphylia; but the arrival of an Imperial army, instead of completing their destruction, afforded the means of safety and victory. Tribigild surprised the unguarded camp of the Romans, in the darkness of the night; seduced the faith of the greater part of the Barbarian auxiliaries, and dissipated, without much effort, the

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troops, which had been corrupted by the relaxation of discipline, and the luxury of the capital. The discontent of Gainas, who had so boldly contrived and executed the death of Rufinus, was irritated by the fortune of his unworthy successor ; he accused his own dishonourable patience under the servile reign of an eunuch ; and the ambitious Goth was convicted, at least in the public opinion, of secretly fomenting the revolt of Tribigild, with whom he was connected by a domestic, as well as by a national, alliance. When Gainas passed the Hellespont, to unite under his standard the remains of the Asiatic troops, he skilfully adapted his motions to the wishes of the Ostrogoths ; abandoning, by his retreat, the country which they desired to invade ; or facilitating, by his approach, the desertion of the Barbarian auxiliaries. To the Imperial court he repeatedly magnified the valour, the genius, the inexhaustible resources of Tribigild ; confessed his own inability to prosecute the war ; and extorted the permission of negotiating with his invincible adversary. The conditions of peace were dictated by the haughty rebel ; and the peremptory demand of the head of Eutropius, revealed the author and the design of this hostile conspiracy.

Fall of Eutropius,
A. D. 399.

The bold satirist, who has indulged his discontent by the partial and passionate censure of the Christian emperors, violates the dignity, rather than the truth, of history, by comparing the son of Theodosius to one of those harmless and simple animals, who scarcely feel that they are the property of their shepherd. Two passions, however, fear and conjugal affection, awakened the languid soul of Arcadius ; he was terrified by the threats of a victorious Barbarian ; and he yielded to the tender eloquence of his wife Eudoxia, who, with a flood of artificial tears, presenting her infant children to their father, implored his jus-

tice for some real or imaginary insult, which she imputed to the audacious eunuch *. The emperor's hand was directed to sign the condemnation of Eutropius ; the magic spell, which during four years had bound the prince and the people, was instantly dissolved ; and the acclamations, that so lately hailed the merit and fortune of the favourite, were converted into the clamours of the soldiers and people, who reproached his crimes, and pressed his immediate execution. In this hour of distress and despair, his only refuge was in the sanctuary of the church, whose privileges he had wisely, or profanely, attempted to circumscribe ; and the most eloquent of the saints, John Chrysostom, enjoyed the triumph of protecting a prostrate minister, whose choice had raised him to the ecclesiastical throne of Constantinople. The archbishop, ascending the pulpit of the cathedral, that he might be distinctly seen and heard by an innumerable crowd of either sex and of every age, pronounced a seasonable and pathetic discourse on the forgiveness of injuries, and the instability of human greatness. The agonies of the pale and affrighted wretch who lay groveling under the table of the altar, exhibited a solemn and instructive spectacle ; and the orator, who was afterwards accused of insulting the misfortunes of Eutropius, laboured to excite the contempt, that he might assuage the fury, of the people †. The powers of humanity, of superstition, and of eloquence, prevailed. The empress Eudoxia was restrained, by her own prejudices, or by those of her subjects, from violating the sanctuary of the church ; and Eutropius was tempted to capitulate, by the milder arts of persuasion, and by an oath, that his life should be spared.

* This anecdote, which Philostorgius alone has preserved (l. xi. c. 6. and Gothofred. Dissertat. p. 451—456), is curious and important ; since it connects the revolt of the Goths with the secret intrigues of the palace.

† See the Homily of Chrysostom, tom. iii. p. 381—386, of which the exordium is particularly beautiful. Socrates, l. vi. c. 5. Sozomen, l. viii. c. 7.

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Careless of the dignity of their sovereign, the new ministers of the palace immediately published an edict, to declare, that his late favourite had disgraced the names of consul and patrician, to abolish his statues, to confiscate his wealth, and to inflict a perpetual exile in the island of Cyprus. A despicable and decrepit eunuch could no longer alarm the fears of his enemies; nor was he capable of enjoying what yet remained, the comforts of peace, of solitude, and of a happy climate. But their implacable revenge still envied him the last moments of a miserable life, and Eutropius had no sooner touched the shores of Cyprus, than he was hastily recalled. The vain hope of eluding, by a change of place, the obligation of an oath, engaged the empress to transfer the scene of his trial and execution from Constantinople to the adjacent suburb of Chalcedon. The consul Aurelian pronounced the sentence; and the motives of that sentence expose the jurisprudence of a despotic government. The crimes which Eutropius had committed against the people might have justified his death; but he was found guilty of harnessing to his chariot the *sacred* animals, who, from their breed, or colour, were reserved for the use of the emperor alone*.

Conspiracy
and fall of
Gainas,
A. D. 400.

While this domestic revolution was transacted, Gainas openly revolted from his allegiance; united his forces, at Thyatira in Lydia, with those of Tribigild; and still maintained his superior ascendant over the rebellious leader of the Ostrogoths. The confederate armies advanced, without resistance, to the straits of the Hellespont, and the Bosphorus; and Arcadius was instructed to prevent the loss of his Asiatic dominions, by resigning his authority and his person to the faith of the Barbarians. The church

* Zosimus, l. v. p. 313. Philostorgius, l. xi. c. 6.

of the holy martyr Euphemia, situate on a lofty eminence near Chalcedon, was chosen for the place of the interview. Gainas bowed, with reverence, at the feet of the emperor, whilst he required the sacrifice of Aurelian and Saturninus, two ministers of consular rank ; and their naked necks were exposed, by the haughty rebel, to the edge of the sword, till he condescended to grant them a precarious and disgraceful respite. The Goths, according to the terms of the agreement, were immediately transported from Asia into Europe ; and their victorious chief, who accepted the title of master-general of the Roman armies, soon filled Constantinople with his troops, and distributed among his dependents the honours and rewards of the empire. In his early youth, Gainas had passed the Danube as a suppliant, and a fugitive : his elevation had been the work of valour and fortune ; and his indiscreet, or perfidious, conduct was the cause of his rapid downfall. Notwithstanding the vigorous opposition of the archbishop, he importunately claimed, for his Arian sectaries, the possession of a peculiar church ; and the pride of the catholics was offended by the public toleration of heresy. Every quarter of Constantinople was filled with tumult and disorder ; and the Barbarians gazed with such ardour on the rich shops of the jewellers, and the tables of the bankers, which were covered with gold and silver, that it was judged prudent to remove those dangerous temptations from their sight. They resented the injurious precaution ; and some alarming attempts were made, during the night, to attack and destroy with fire the Imperial palace. In this state of mutual and suspicious hostility, the guards, and the people of Constantinople, shut the gates, and rose in arms to prevent, or to punish, the conspiracy of the Goths. During the absence of Gainas, his troops were surprised and oppressed ;

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seven thousand Barbarians perished in this bloody massacre. In the fury of the pursuit, the catholics uncovered the roof, and continued to throw down flaming logs of wood, till they overwhelmed their adversaries, who had retreated to the church or conventicle of the Arians. Gainas was either innocent of the design, or too confident of his success : he was astonished by the intelligence, that the flower of his army had been ingloriously destroyed ; that he himself was declared a public enemy ; and that his countryman, Fravitta, a brave and loyal confederate, had assumed the management of the war by sea and land. The enterprises of the rebel, against the cities of Thrace, were encountered by a firm and well-ordered defence : his hungry soldiers were soon reduced to the grass that grew on the margin of the fortifications ; and Gainas, who vainly regretted the wealth and luxury of Asia, embraced a desperate resolution of forcing the passage of the Hellespont. He was destitute of vessels ; but the woods of the Chersonesus afforded materials for rafts, and his intrepid Barbarians did not refuse to trust themselves to the waves. But Fravitta attentively watched the progress of their undertaking. As soon as they had gained the middle of the stream, the Roman galleys, impelled by the full force of oars, of the current, and of the favourable wind, rushed forwards in compact order, and with irresistible weight ; and the Hellespont was covered with the fragments of the Gothic shipwreck. After the destruction of his hopes, and the loss of many thousands of his bravest soldiers, Gainas, who could no longer aspire to govern, or to subdue, the Romans, determined to resume the independence of a savage life. A light and active body of Barbarian horse, disengaged from their infantry and baggage, might perform, in eight or ten days, a march of three hundred miles from the Hellespont to

Dec. 23.

the Danube ; the garrisons of that important frontier had been gradually annihilated ; the river, in the month of December, would be deeply frozen ; and the unbounded prospect of Scythia was opened to the ambition of Gainas. This design was secretly communicated to the national troops, who devoted themselves to the fortunes of their leader ; and before the signal of departure was given, a great number of provincial auxiliaries, whom he suspected of an attachment to their native country, were perfidiously massacred. The Goths advanced, by rapid marches, through the plains of Thrace ; and they were soon delivered from the fear of a pursuit, by the vanity of Fravitta, who, instead of extinguishing the war, hastened to enjoy the popular applause, and to assume the peaceful honours of the consulship. But a formidable ally appeared in arms to vindicate the majesty of the empire, and to guard the peace and liberty of Scythia. The superior forces of Uldin, king of the Huns, opposed the progress of Gainas ; a hostile and ruined country prohibited his retreat ; he disdained to capitulate ; and after repeatedly attempting to cut his way through the ranks of the enemy, he was slain, with his desperate followers, in the field of battle. Eleven days after the naval victory of the Hellespont, the head of Gainas, the inestimable gift of the conqueror, was received at Constantinople with the most liberal expressions of gratitude ; and the public deliverance was celebrated by festivals and illuminations. The triumphs of Arcadius became the subject of epic poems ; and the monarch, no longer oppressed by any hostile terrors, resigned himself to the mild and absolute dominion of his wife, the fair and artful Eudoxia ; who has sullied her fame by the persecution of St. John Chrysostom.

A. D. 401,
Jan. 3.

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Election
and merit of
Chrysostom,
A. D. 398,
Feb. 26.

After the death of the indolent Nectarius, the successor of Gregory Nazianzen, the church of Constantinople was distracted by the ambition of rival candidates, who were not ashamed to solicit, with gold or flattery, the suffrage of the people, or of the favourite. On this occasion, Eutropius seems to have deviated from his ordinary maxims; and his uncorrupted judgment was determined only by the superior merit of a stranger. In a late journey into the East, he had admired the sermons of John, a native and presbyter of Antioch, whose name has been distinguished by the epithet of Chrysostom, or the Golden Mouth. A private order was despatched to the governor of Syria; and as the people might be unwilling to resign their favourite preacher, he was transported with speed and secrecy in a post-chariot, from Antioch to Constantinople. The unanimous and unsolicited consent of the court, the clergy, and the people, ratified the choice of the minister; and, both as a saint and an orator, the new archbishop surpassed the sanguine expectations of the public. Born of a noble and opulent family, in the capital of Syria, Chrysostom had been educated by the care of a tender mother, under the tuition of the most skilful masters. He studied the art of rhetoric in the school of Libanius; and that celebrated sophist, who soon discovered the talents of his disciple, ingenuously confessed, that John would have deserved to succeed him, had he not been stolen away by the Christians. His piety soon disposed him to receive the sacrament of baptism; to renounce the lucrative and honourable profession of the law, and to bury himself in the adjacent desert. The authority of Maletius devoted his talents to the service of the church: but in the midst of his family, and afterwards on the archiepiscopal throne, Chrysostom still

persevered in the practice of the monastic virtues. The ample revenues, which his predecessors had consumed in pomp and luxury, he diligently applied to the establishment of hospitals; and the multitudes, who were supported by his charity, preferred the eloquent and edifying discourses of their archbishop, to the amusements of the theatre or the circus. The monuments of that eloquence, which was admired near twenty years at Antioch and Constantinople, have been carefully preserved; and the possession of near one thousand sermons, or homilies, has authorised the critics of succeeding times to appreciate the genuine merit of Chrysostom. They unanimously attribute to the Christian orator the free command of an elegant and copious language; the judgment to conceal the advantages which he derived from the knowledge of rhetoric and philosophy; an inexhaustible fund of metaphors and similitudes, of ideas and images, to vary and illustrate the most familiar topics; the happy art of engaging the passions in the service of virtue; and of exposing the folly, as well as the turpitude, of vice, almost with the truth and spirit of a dramatic representation.

The pastoral labours of the archbishop of Constantinople provoked, and gradually united against him, two sorts of enemies; the aspiring clergy, who envied his success, and the obstinate sinners, who were offended by his reproofs. When Chrysostom thundered, from the pulpit of St. Sophia, against the degeneracy of the Christians, his shafts were spent among the crowd, without wounding, or even marking, the character of any individual. When he declaimed against the peculiar vices of the rich, poverty might obtain a transient consolation from his invectives: but the guilty were still sheltered by their numbers; and the reproach itself was dignified by some ideas of superiority, and enjoyment. But

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His administration and defects,
A. D. 398
—403.

as the pyramid rose towards the summit, it insensibly diminished to a point ; and the magistrates, the ministers, the favourite eunuchs, the ladies of the court, the empress Eudoxia herself, had a much larger share of guilt, to divide among a smaller proportion of criminals. The personal applications of the audience were anticipated, or confirmed, by the testimony of their own conscience ; and the intrepid preacher assumed the dangerous right of exposing both the offence, and the offender, to the public abhorrence. The secret resentment of the court encouraged the discontent of the clergy and monks of Constantinople, who were too hastily reformed by the fervent zeal of their archbishop. He had condemned, from the pulpit, the domestic females of the clergy of Constantinople, who, under the names of servants, or sisters, afforded a perpetual occasion either of sin, or of scandal. The silent and solitary ascetics, who had secluded themselves from the world, were intitled to the warmest approbation of Chrysostom ; but he despised and stigmatised, as the disgrace of their holy profession, the crowd of degenerate monks, who, from some unworthy motives of pleasure or profit, so frequently infested the streets of the capital. To the voice of persuasion, the archbishop was obliged to add the terrors of authority ; and his ardour, in the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, was not always exempt from passion ; nor was it always guided by prudence. Chrysostom was naturally of a choleric disposition ; and his sentiments were sometimes delivered with too much energy of countenance and expression. He still maintained, from some considerations of health, or abstinence, his former habits of taking his repasts alone ; and this inhospitable custom, which his enemies imputed to pride, contributed, at least, to nourish the infirmity of a morose and unsocial humour. Separated from that

familiar intercourse, which facilitates the knowledge and the despatch of business, he reposed an unsuspecting confidence in his deacon Serapion; and seldom applied his speculative knowledge of human nature to the particular characters, either of his dependents, or of his equals. Conscious of the purity of his intentions, and perhaps of the superiority of his genius, the archbishop of Constantinople extended the jurisdiction of the Imperial city, that he might enlarge the sphere of his pastoral labours; and the conduct which the profane imputed to an ambitious motive, appeared to Chrysostom himself in the light of a sacred and indispensable duty. In his visitation through the Asiatic provinces, he deposed thirteen bishops of Lydia and Phrygia; and indiscreetly declared, that a deep corruption of simony and licentiousness had infected the whole episcopal order. If those bishops were innocent, such a rash and unjust condemnation must excite a well-grounded discontent. If they were guilty, the numerous associates of their guilt would soon discover, that their own safety depended on the ruin of the archbishop; whom they studied to represent as the tyrant of the Eastern church.

This ecclesiastical conspiracy was managed by Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria, an active and ambitious prelate, who displayed the fruits of rapine in monuments of ostentation. His national dislike to the rising greatness of a city, which degraded him from the second to the third rank in the Christian world, was exasperated by some personal disputes with Chrysostom himself. By the private invitation of the empress, Theophilus landed at Constantinople, with a stout body of Egyptian mariners, to encounter the populace; and a train of dependent bishops, to secure, by their voices, the majority of a synod. The synod was convened in the suburb of Chalcedon,

Chrysostom
is persecuted by
the empress
Eudoxia,
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surnamed the *Oak*, where Rufinus had erected a stately church and monastery ; and their proceedings were continued during fourteen days, or sessions. A bishop and a deacon accused the archbishop of Constantinople ; but the frivolous or improbable nature of the forty-seven articles which they presented against him, may justly be considered as a fair and unexceptionable panegyric. Four successive summons were signified to Chrysostom ; but he still refused to trust either his person, or his reputation, in the hands of his implacable enemies, who, prudently declining the examination of any particular charges, condemned his contumacious disobedience, and hastily pronounced a sentence of deposition. The synod of the *Oak* immediately addressed the emperor to ratify and execute their judgment, and charitably insinuated, that the penalties of treason might be inflicted on the audacious preacher, who had reviled, under the name of Jezebel, the empress Eudoxia herself. The archbishop was rudely arrested, and conducted through the city, by one of the Imperial messengers, who landed him, after a short navigation, near the entrance of the Euxine ; from whence, before the expiration of two days, he was gloriously recalled.

Popular
tumults at
Constanti-
nople.

The first astonishment of his faithful people had been mute and passive : they suddenly rose with unanimous and irresistible fury. Theophilus escaped ; but the promiscuous crowd of monks and Egyptian mariners were slaughtered without pity in the streets of Constantinople. A seasonable earthquake justified the interposition of heaven ; the torrent of sedition rolled forwards to the gates of the palace ; and the empress, agitated by fear or remorse, threw herself at the feet of Arcadius, and confessed, that the public safety could be purchased only by the restoration of Chrysostom. The Bosphorus was covered with

innumerable vessels ; the shores of Europe and Asia were profusely illuminated ; and the acclamations of a victorious people accompanied, from the port to the cathedral, the triumph of the archbishop ; who, too easily, consented to resume the exercise of his functions, before his sentence had been legally reversed by the authority of an ecclesiastical synod. Ignorant, or careless, of the impending danger, Chrysostom indulged his zeal, or perhaps his resentment ; declaimed with peculiar asperity against *female* vices ; and condemned the profane honours which were addressed, almost in the precincts of St. Sophia, to the statue of the empress. His imprudence tempted his enemies to inflame the haughty spirit of Eudoxia, by reporting, or perhaps inventing, the famous exordium of a sermon, “ Herodias is again furious ; Herodias again dances ; she once more requires the head of John ;” an insolent allusion, which, as a woman and a sovereign, it was impossible for her to forgive*. The short interval of a perfidious truce was employed to concert more effectual measures for the disgrace and ruin of the archbishop. A numerous council of the Eastern prelates, who were guided from a distance by the advice of Theophilus, confirmed the validity, without examining the justice, of the former sentence ; and a detachment of Barbarian troops was introduced into the city, to suppress the emotions of the people. On the vigil of Easter, the solemn administration of baptism was rudely interrupted by the soldiers, who alarmed the modesty of the naked catechumens, and violated, by their presence, the awful mysteries of the Christian worship. Arsacius occupied the church of St. Sophia, and the archiepiscopal throne. The catholics retreated to the

* See Socrates, l. vi. c. 13. Sozomen, l. viii. c. 20.

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baths of Constantine, and afterwards to the fields : where they were still pursued and insulted by the guards, the bishops, and the magistrates. The fatal day of the second and final exile of Chrysostom was marked by the conflagration of the cathedral, of the senate-house, and of the adjacent buildings ; and this calamity was imputed, without proof, but not without probability, to the despair of a persecuted faction.

Exile of
Chrysostom,
A. D. 404.
June 20.

Cicero might claim some merit, if his voluntary banishment preserved the peace of the republic ; but the submission of Chrysostom was the indispensable duty of a Christian and a subject. Instead of listening to his humble prayer, that he might be permitted to reside at Cyzicus, or Nicomedia, the inflexible empress assigned for his exile the remote and desolate town of Cucusus, among the ridges of Mount Taurus, in the Lesser Armenia. A secret hope was entertained, that the archbishop might perish in a difficult and dangerous march of seventy days in the heat of summer, through the provinces of Asia Minor, where he was continually threatened by the hostile attacks of the Isaurians, and the more implacable fury of the monks. Yet Chrysostom arrived in safety at the place of his confinement ; and the three years, which he spent at Cucusus, and the neighbouring town of Arabissus, were the last and most glorious of his life. His character was consecrated by absence and persecution ; the faults of his administration were not long remembered ; but every tongue repeated the praises of his genius and virtue : and the respectful attention of the Christian world was fixed on a desert spot among the mountains of Taurus. From that solitude, the archbishop, whose active mind was invigorated by misfortunes, maintained a strict and frequent corre-

spondence* with the most distant provinces; exhorted the separate congregation of his faithful adherents to persevere in their allegiance; urged the destruction of the temples of Phœnicia, and the extirpation of heresy in the isle of Cyprus; extended his pastoral care to the missions of Persia and Scythia; negotiated, by his ambassadors, with the Roman pontiff, and the emperor Honorius; and boldly appealed, from a partial synod, to the supreme tribunal of a free and general council. The mind of the illustrious exile was still independent; but his captive body was exposed to the revenge of the oppressors, who continued to abuse the name and authority of Arcadius. An order was despatched for the instant removal of Chrysostom to the extreme desert of Pityus; and his guards so faithfully obeyed their cruel instructions, that, before he reached the sea-coast of the Euxine, he expired at Comana, in Pontus, in the sixtieth year of his age. The succeeding generation acknowledged his innocence and merit. The archbishops of the East, who might blush that their predecessors had been the enemies of Chrysostom, were gradually disposed, by the firmness of the Roman pontiff, to restore the honours of that venerable name. At the pious solicitation of the clergy and people of Constantinople, his relics, thirty years after his death, were transported from their obscure sepulchre to the royal city. The emperor Theodosius advanced to receive them as far as Chalcedon; and, falling prostrate on the coffin, implored in the name of his guilty parents, Arcadius and Eudoxia, the forgiveness of the injured saint.

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His death,
A. D. 407,
Sept. 14.

His relics
transported
to Constan-
tinople,
A. D. 438,
Jan. 27.

* Two hundred and forty-two of the epistles of Chrysostom are still extant (*Opera*, tom. iii. p. 528—736). They are addressed to a great variety of persons, and show a firmness of mind, much superior to that of Cicero in his exile. The fourteenth epistle contains a curious narrative of the dangers of his journey.

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The death
of Arcadius,
A. D. 408,
May 1.

Yet a reasonable doubt may be entertained, whether any stain of hereditary guilt could be derived from Arcadius to his successor. Eudoxia was a young and beautiful woman, who indulged her passions, and despised her husband: Count John enjoyed, at least, the familiar confidence of the empress: and the public named him as the real father of Theodosius the younger*. The birth of a son was accepted, however, by the pious husband, as an event the most fortunate and honourable to himself, to his family, and to the eastern world: and the royal infant, by an unprecedented favour, was invested with the titles of Cæsar and Augustus. In less than four years afterwards, Eudoxia, in the bloom of youth, was destroyed by the consequences of a miscarriage; and perhaps the emperor was the only person who sincerely bewailed the loss of the haughty and rapacious empress. Such a domestic misfortune afflicted *him* more deeply than the public calamities of the East†; the licentious excursions from Pontus to Palestine, of the Isaurian robbers, whose impunity accused the weakness of the government; and the earthquakes, the conflagrations, the famine, and the flights of locusts, which the popular discontent was equally disposed to attribute to the incapacity of the monarch. At length, in the thirty-first year of his age, after a reign (if we may abuse that word) of thirteen years three months and fifteen days, Arcadius expired in the palace of Constantinople. It is impossible to delineate his character; since, in a period very copiously furnished with historical ma-

* Zosimus, l. v. p. 315. The chastity of an empress should not be impeached without producing a witness; but it is astonishing, that the witness should write and live under a prince, whose legitimacy he dared to attack. We must suppose that his history was a party libel, privately read and circulated by the pagans. Tillemont (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. v. p. 782) is not averse to brand the reputation of Eudoxia.

† Philostorg. l. xi. c. 8. and Godefroy, *Dissertat.* p. 457.

terials, it has not been possible to remark one action that properly belongs to the son of the great Theodosius.

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The historian Procopius* has indeed illuminated the mind of the dying emperor with a ray of human prudence, or celestial wisdom. Arcadius considered, with anxious foresight, the helpless condition of his son Theodosius, who was no more than seven years of age, the dangerous factions of a minority, and the aspiring spirit of Jezdegerd, the Persian monarch. Instead of tempting the allegiance of an ambitious subject, by the participation of supreme power, he boldly appealed to the magnanimity of a king; and placed, by a solemn testament, the sceptre of the East in the hands of Jezdegerd himself. The royal guardian accepted and discharged this honourable trust with unexampled fidelity; and the infancy of Theodosius was protected by the arms and councils of Persia. Such is the singular narrative of Procopius; and his veracity is not disputed by Agathias, while he presumes to dissent from his judgment, and to arraign the wisdom of a Christian emperor, who so rashly, though so fortunately, committed his son and his dominions to the unknown faith of a stranger, a rival, and a heathen. At the distance of one hundred and fifty years, this political question might be debated in the court of Justinian; but a prudent historian will refuse to examine the *propriety*, till he has ascertained the *truth*, of the testament of Arcadius. As it stands without a parallel in the history of the world, we may justly require that it should be attested by the positive and unanimous evidence of contemporaries. The strange novelty of the event, which excites our distrust, must have attracted their notice; and their universal silence annihilates the vain tradition of the succeeding age.

His supposed testament.

* Procopius, de Bell. Persic. l. i. c. 2, p. 8. edit. Louvre.

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Administra-
tion of An-
themius,
A. D. 408
—415.

The maxims of Roman jurisprudence, if they could be fairly transferred from private property to public dominion, would have adjudged to the emperor Honorius the guardianship of his nephew, till he had attained, at least, the fourteenth year of his age. But the weakness of Honorius, and the calamities of his reign, disqualified him from prosecuting this natural claim; and such was the absolute separation of the two monarchies, both in interest and affection, that Constantinople would have obeyed, with less reluctance, the orders of the Persian, than those of the Italian, court. Under a prince, whose weakness is disguised by the external signs of manhood and discretion, the most worthless favourites may secretly dispute the empire of the palace; and dictate to submissive provinces the commands of a master, whom they direct and despise. But the ministers of a child, who is incapable of arming them with the sanction of the royal name, must acquire and exercise an independent authority. The great officers of the state and army, who had been appointed before the death of Arcadius, formed an aristocracy, which might have inspired them with the idea of a free republic; and the government of the Eastern empire was fortunately assumed by the præfect Anthemius, who obtained, by his superior abilities, a lasting ascendant over the minds of his equals. The safety of the young emperor proved the merit and integrity of Anthemius: and his prudent firmness sustained the force and reputation of an infant reign. Uldin, with a formidable host of Barbarians, was encamped in the heart of Thrace: he proudly rejected all terms of accommodation; and pointing to the rising sun, declared to the Roman ambassadors, that the course of that planet should alone terminate the conquests of the Huns. But the desertion of his confederates, who were privately

convinced of the justice and liberality of the Imperial ministers, obliged Uldin to repass the Danube; the tribe of the Scyrri, which composed his rear-guard, was almost extirpated; and many thousand captives were dispersed to cultivate, with servile labour, the fields of Asia. In the midst of the public triumph, Constantinople was protected by a strong inclosure of new and more extensive walls; the same vigilant care was applied to restore the fortifications of the Illyrian cities: and a plan was judiciously conceived, which, in the space of seven years, would have secured the command of the Danube, by establishing on that river a perpetual fleet of two hundred and fifty armed vessels.

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But the Romans had so long been accustomed to the authority of a monarch, that the first, even among the females, of the Imperial family, who displayed any courage or capacity, was permitted to ascend the vacant throne of Theodosius. His sister Pulcheria*, who was only two years older than himself, received, at the age of sixteen, the title of *Augusta*; and though her favour might be sometimes clouded by caprice or intrigue, she continued to govern the Eastern empire near forty years; during the long minority of her brother, and, after his death, in her own name, and in the name of Marcian, her nominal husband. Pulcheria, her two sisters, and a chosen train of favourite damsels, formed a religious community: they renounced the vanity of dress; interrupted, by frequent fasts, their simple and frugal diet; allotted a portion of their time to works of embroidery; and devoted several hours of the day and night to the exercises of prayer and psalmody. The piety of a Christian virgin was adorned by the

Character
and admin-
istration of
Pulcheria,
A. D. 414
—453.

* Sozomen has filled three chapters with a magnificent panegyric of Pulcheria (l. ix. c. 1, 2, 3); and Tillemont (*Memoires Eccles.* tom. xv. p. 171—184) has dedicated a separate article to the honour of St. Pulcheria, virgin and empress.

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zeal and liberality of an empress. Ecclesiastical history describes the splendid churches, which were built at the expense of Pulcheria, in all the provinces of the East ; her charitable foundations for the benefit of strangers and the poor ; the ample donations which she assigned for the perpetual maintenance of monastic societies ; and the active severity with which she laboured to suppress the opposite heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches. Yet the devotion of Pulcheria never diverted her indefatigable attention from temporal affairs ; and she alone, among all the descendants of the great Theodosius, appears to have inherited any share of his manly spirit and abilities. The elegant and familiar use which she had acquired, both of the Greek and Latin languages, was readily applied to the various occasions of speaking, or writing, on public business ; her deliberations were maturely weighed ; her actions were prompt and decisive ; and, while she moved without noise or ostentation the wheel of government, she discreetly attributed to the genius of the emperor the long tranquillity of his reign. In the last years of his peaceful life, Europe was indeed afflicted by the arms of Attila ; but the more extensive provinces of Asia still continued to enjoy a profound and permanent repose. Theodosius the younger was never reduced to the disgraceful necessity of encountering and punishing a rebellious subject : and since we cannot applaud the vigour, some praise may be due to the mildness, and prosperity, of the administration of Pulcheria.

Education
and character of
Theodosius
the younger.

The Roman world was deeply interested in the education of its master. A regular course of study and exercise was judiciously instituted ; of the military exercises of riding, and shooting with the bow ; of the liberal studies of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy : the most skilful masters of the East am-

bitiously solicited the attention of their royal pupil ; and several noble youths were introduced into the palace, to animate his diligence by the emulation of friendship. Pulcheria alone discharged the important task of instructing her brother in the arts of government ; but her precepts may countenance some suspicion of the extent of her capacity, or of the purity of her intentions. She taught him to maintain a grave and majestic deportment ; to walk, to hold his robes, to seat himself on his throne, in a manner worthy of a great prince ; to abstain from laughter ; to listen with condescension ; to return suitable answers ; to assume, by turns, a serious or a placid countenance ; in a word, to represent with grace and dignity the external figure of a Roman emperor. But Theodosius was never excited to support the weight and glory of an illustrious name ; and instead of aspiring to imitate his ancestors, he degenerated (if we may presume to measure the degrees of incapacity) below the weakness of his father and his uncle. Arcadius and Honorius had been assisted by the guardian care of a parent, whose lessons were enforced by his authority and example. But the unfortunate prince, who is born in the purple, must remain a stranger to the voice of truth ; and the son of Arcadius was condemned to pass his perpetual infancy, encompassed only by a servile train of women and eunuchs. The ample leisure, which he acquired by neglecting the essential duties of his high office, was filled by idle amusements, and unprofitable studies. Hunting was the only active pursuit that could tempt him beyond the limits of the palace ; but he most assiduously laboured, sometimes by the light of a midnight lamp, in the mechanic occupations of painting and carving ; and the elegance with which he transcribed religious books entitled the Roman emperor to the singular epithet of *Calligraphes*, or a fair writer. Separated

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from the world by an impenetrable veil, Theodosius trusted the persons whom he loved ; he loved those who were accustomed to amuse and flatter his indolence ; and as he never perused the papers that were presented for the royal signature, the acts of injustice the most repugnant to his character were frequently perpetrated in his name. The emperor himself was chaste, temperate, liberal, and merciful ; but these qualities, which can only deserve the name of virtues, when they are supported by courage, and regulated by discretion, were seldom beneficial, and they sometimes proved mischievous, to mankind.

Character
and adventures of the
empress
Eudocia,
A. D. 421
—460.

The story of a fair and virtuous maiden, exalted from a private condition to the Imperial throne, might be deemed an incredible romance, if such a romance had not been verified in the marriage of Theodosius. The celebrated Athenais was educated by her father Leontius in the religion and sciences of the Greeks ; and so advantageous was the opinion which the Athenian philosopher entertained of his contemporaries, that he divided his patrimony between his two sons, bequeathing to his daughter a small legacy of one hundred pieces of gold, in the lively confidence that her beauty and merit would be a sufficient portion. The jealousy and avarice of her brothers soon compelled Athenais to seek a refuge at Constantinople ; and, with some hopes, either of justice or favour, to throw herself at the feet of Pulcheria. That sagacious princess listened to her eloquent complaint ; and secretly destined the daughter of the philosopher Leontius for the future wife of the emperor of the East, who had now attained the twentieth year of his age. She easily excited the curiosity of her brother, by an interesting picture of the charms of Athenais ; large eyes, a well-proportioned nose, a fair complexion, golden locks, a slender person, a graceful demeanour, an understanding improved by study, and

a virtue tried by distress. Theodosius, concealed behind a curtain in the apartment of his sister, was permitted to behold the Athenian virgin: the modest youth immediately declared his pure and honourable love; and the royal nuptials were celebrated amidst the acclamations of the capital and the provinces. Athenais, who was easily persuaded to renounce the errors of Paganism, received at her baptism the Christian name of Eudocia; but the cautious Pulcheria withheld the title of Augusta, till the wife of Theodosius had approved her fruitfulness by the birth of a daughter, who espoused, fifteen years afterwards, the emperor of the West. The brothers of Eudocia obeyed, with some anxiety, her Imperial summons; but as she could easily forgive their fortunate unkindness, she indulged the tenderness, or perhaps the vanity, of a sister, by promoting them to the rank of consuls and præfects. In the luxury of the palace, she still cultivated those ingenious arts, which had contributed to her greatness; and wisely dedicated her talents to the honour of religion, and of her husband. Eudocia composed a poetical paraphrase of the first eight books of the Old Testament, and of the prophecies of Daniel and Zachariah; a cento of the verses of Homer, applied to the life and miracles of Christ, the legend of St. Cyprian, and a Panegyric on the Persian victories of Theodosius: and her writings, which were applauded by a servile and superstitious age, have not been disdained by the candour of impartial criticism*. The fondness of the emperor was not abated by time and possession; and Eudocia, after the marriage of her daughter, was permitted to discharge her grateful vows by a solemn pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Her ostentatious progress through the East may seem inconsistent with the spirit of Christian humility: she pronounced, from a

* Socrates, l. vii. c. 21. Photius, p. 413—420.

throne of gold and gems, an eloquent oration to the senate of Antioch, declared her royal intention of enlarging the walls of the city, bestowed a donative of two hundred pounds of gold to restore the public baths, and accepted the statues, which were decreed by the gratitude of Antioch. In the Holy Land, her alms and pious foundations exceeded the munificence of the great Helena. But this pilgrimage was the fatal term of the glories of Eudocia. Satiated with empty pomp, and unmindful, perhaps, of her obligations to Pulcheria, she ambitiously aspired to the government of the Eastern empire: the palace was distracted by female discord; but the victory was at last decided by the superior ascendant of the sister of Theodosius. The execution of Paulinus, master of the offices, and the disgrace of Cyrus, Prætorian præfect of the East, convinced the public, that the favour of Eudocia was insufficient to protect her most faithful friends; and the uncommon beauty of Paulinus encouraged the secret rumour, that his guilt was that of a successful lover. As soon as the empress perceived that the affection of Theodosius was irretrievably lost, she requested the permission of retiring to the distant solitude of Jerusalem. She obtained her request; but the jealousy of Theodosius, or the vindictive spirit of Pulcheria, pursued her in her last retreat; and Saturninus, count of the domestics, was directed to punish with death two ecclesiastics, her most favoured servants. Eudocia instantly revenged them by the assassination of the count: the furious passions, which she indulged on this suspicious occasion, seemed to justify the severity of Theodosius; and the empress, ignominiously stript of the honours of her rank, was disgraced, perhaps unjustly, in the eyes of the world. The remainder of the life of Eudocia, about sixteen years, was spent in exile and devotion; and the approach of age, the death of Theodosius, the mis-

fortunes of her only daughter, who was led a captive from Rome to Carthage, and the society of the Holy Monks of Palestine, insensibly confirmed the religious temper of her mind. After a full experience of the vicissitudes of human life, the daughter of the philosopher Leontius expired, at Jerusalem, in the sixty-seventh year of her age; protesting, with her dying breath, that she had never transgressed the bounds of innocence and friendship.

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The gentle mind of Theodosius was never inflamed by the ambition of conquest, or military renown; and the slight alarm of a Persian war scarcely interrupted the tranquillity of the East. The motives of this war were just and honourable. In the last year of the reign of Jezdegerd, the supposed guardian of Theodosius, a bishop, who aspired to the crown of martyrdom, destroyed one of the fire-temples of Susa*. His zeal and obstinacy were revenged on his brethren: the Magi excited a cruel persecution; and the intolerant zeal of Jezdegerd was imitated by his son Varanes, or Bahram, who soon afterwards ascended the throne. Some Christian fugitives, who escaped to the Roman frontier, were sternly demanded, and generously refused; and the refusal, aggravated by commercial disputes, soon kindled a war between the rival monarchies. The mountains of Armenia, and the plains of Mesopotamia, were filled with hostile armies; but the operations of two successive campaigns were not productive of any decisive or memorable events. Some engagements were fought, some towns were besieged, with various and doubtful success; and if the Romans failed in their attempt to recover the long lost possession of Nisibis, the Persians were repulsed from the walls of a Mesopotamian city, by the valour of a martial bishop, who

The Persian war,
A.D. 422.

* Theodoret, l. v. c. 39. Tillemont, Mem. Eccles. tom. xii. p. 356—364. Asemanni, Bibliot. Oriental. tom. iii. p. 396, tom. iv. p. 61.

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pointed his thundering engine in the name of St. Thomas the Apostle. Yet the splendid victories, which the incredible speed of the messenger Palladius repeatedly announced to the palace of Constantinople, were celebrated with festivals and panegyrics. From these panegyrics the * historians of the age might borrow their extraordinary, and, perhaps, fabulous, tales; of the proud challenge of a Persian hero, who was entangled by the net, and despatched by the sword, of Areobindus the Goth; of the ten thousand *Immortals* who were slain in the attack of the Roman camp; and of the hundred thousand Arabs, or Saracens, who were impelled by a panic terror to throw themselves headlong into the Euphrates. Such events may be disbelieved, or disregarded; but the charity of a bishop, Acacius of Amida, whose name might have dignified the saintly calendar, shall not be lost in oblivion. Boldly declaring that vases of gold and silver are useless to a God who neither eats nor drinks, the generous prelate sold the plate of the church of Amida; employed the price in the redemption of seven thousand Persian captives; supplied their wants with affectionate liberality; and dismissed them to their native country, to inform the king of the true spirit of the religion which he persecuted. The practice of benevolence in the midst of war must always tend to assuage the animosity of contending nations; and I wish to persuade myself, that Acacius contributed to the restoration of peace. In the conference which was held on the limits of the two empires, the Roman ambassadors degraded the personal character of their sovereign, by a vain attempt to magnify the extent of his power; when they seriously advised the Persians to prevent, by a

* Socrates (l. vii. c. 18, 19, 20, 21,) is the best author for the Persian war. We may likewise consult the three Chronicles, the Paschal, and those of Marcellinus and Malala.

timely accommodation, the wrath of a monarch, who was yet ignorant of this distant war. A truce of one hundred years was solemnly ratified; and, although the revolutions of Armenia might threaten the public tranquillity, the essential conditions of this treaty were respected near fourscore years by the successors of Constantine and Artaxerxes.

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Since the Roman and Parthian standards first encountered on the banks of the Euphrates, the kingdom of Armenia was alternately oppressed by its formidable protectors; and, in the course of this History, several events, which inclined the balance of peace and war, have been already related. A disgraceful treaty had resigned Armenia to the ambition of Sapor; and the scale of Persia appeared to preponderate. But the royal race of Arsaces impatiently submitted to the house of Sassan; the turbulent nobles asserted, or betrayed, their hereditary independence; and the nation was still attached to the *Christian* princes of Constantinople. In the beginning of the fifth century, Armenia was divided by the progress of war and faction; and the unnatural division precipitated the downfall of that ancient monarchy. Chosroes, the Persian vassal, reigned over the eastern and most extensive portion of the country; while the western province acknowledged the jurisdiction of Arsaces, and the supremacy of the emperor Arcadius. After the death of Arsaces, the Romans suppressed the regal government, and imposed on their allies the condition of subjects. The military command was delegated to the count of the Armenian frontier; the city of Theodosiopolis* was built and fortified in a strong situation, on a fertile and lofty ground, near the sources of the Euphrates;

Armenia
divided be-
tween the
Persians and
the Romans.

* Moses Choren. l. iii. c. 59, p. 309, and p. 358. Procopius, de Edificiis, l. iii. c. 5. Theodosiopolis stands, or rather stood, about thirty-five miles to the east of Arzeroum, the modern capital of Turkish Armenia. See d'Anville, *Géographie Ancienne*, tom. ii. p. 99, 100.

and the dependent territories were ruled by five satraps, whose dignity was marked by a peculiar habit of gold and purple. The less fortunate nobles, who lamented the loss of their king, and envied the honours of their equals, were provoked to negotiate their peace and pardon at the Persian court; and returning, with their followers, to the palace of Artaxata, acknowledged Chosroes for their lawful sovereign. About thirty years afterwards, Artasires, the nephew and successor of Chosroes, fell under the displeasure of the haughty and capricious nobles of Armenia; they unanimously desired a Persian governor in the room of an unworthy king; and absurdly rejoiced in the sentence of condemnation, which, after a partial hearing, was solemnly pronounced by Bahram himself. The descendants of Arsaces were degraded from the royal dignity, which they had possessed above five hundred and sixty years; and the dominions of the unfortunate Artasires, under the new and significant appellation of Persarmenia, were reduced into the form of a province. This usurpation excited the jealousy of the Roman government; but the rising disputes were soon terminated by an amicable, though unequal, partition of the ancient kingdom of Armenia; and a territorial acquisition, which Augustus might have despised, reflected some lustre on the declining empire of the younger Theodosius.

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*Death of Honorius.—Valentinian III. Emperor of the East.
—Administration of his Mother Placidia.—Ætius and
Boniface.—Conquest of Africa by the Vandals.*

- DURING a long and disgraceful reign of twenty-eight years, Honorius, emperor of the West, was separated from the friendship of his brother, and afterwards of his nephew, who reigned over the East ; and Constantinople beheld, with apparent indifference and secret joy, the calamities of Rome. The strange adventures of Placidia gradually renewed, and cemented, the alliance of the two empires. The daughter of the great Theodosius had been the captive, and the queen, of the Goths ; she lost an affectionate husband ; she was dragged in chains by his insulting assassin ; she tasted the pleasure of revenge, and was exchanged, in the treaty of peace, for six hundred thousand measures of wheat. After her return from Spain to Italy, Placidia experienced a new persecution in the bosom of her family. She was averse to a marriage, which had been stipulated without her consent ; and the brave Constantius, as a noble reward for the tyrants whom he had vanquished, received, from the hand of Honorius himself, the struggling and reluctant hand of the widow of Adolphus. But her resistance ended with the ceremony of the nuptials ; nor did Placidia refuse to become the mother of Honoria and Valentinian the third, or to assume and exercise an absolute dominion over the mind of her grateful husband. The generous soldier, whose time had hitherto been divided between social pleasure and military service,

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Last years
and death
of Honorius,
A. D. 423,
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was taught new lessons of avarice and ambition : he extorted the title of Augustus ; and the servant of Honorius was associated to the empire of the West. The death of Constantius, in the seventh month of his reign, instead of diminishing, seemed to increase, the power of Placidia ; and the indecent familiarity of her brother, which might be no more than the symptoms of a childish affection, were universally attributed to incestuous love. On a sudden, by some base intrigues of a steward and a nurse, this excessive fondness was converted into an irreconcilable quarrel : the debates of the emperor and his sister were not long confined within the walls of the palace ; and as the Gothic soldiers adhered to their queen, the city of Ravenna was agitated with bloody and dangerous tumults, which could only be appeased by the forced or voluntary retreat of Placidia and her children. The royal exiles landed at Constantinople, soon after the marriage of Theodosius, during the festival of the Persian victories. They were treated with kindness and magnificence ; but as the statues of the emperor Constantius had been rejected by the Eastern court, the title of Augusta could not decently be allowed to his widow. Within a few months after the arrival of Placidia, a swift messenger announced the death of Honorius, the consequence of a dropsy ; but the important secret was not divulged, till the necessary orders had been despatched for the march of a large body of troops to the sea-coast of Dalmatia. The shops and the gates of Constantinople remained shut during seven days ; and the loss of a foreign prince, who could neither be esteemed nor regretted, was celebrated with loud and affected demonstrations of the public grief.

Elevation
and fall of
the usurper
John,
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While the ministers of Constantinople deliberated, the vacant throne of Honorius was usurped by the ambition of a stranger. The name of the rebel was

John : he filled the confidential office of *Primicerius*, or principal secretary ; and history has attributed to his character more virtues than can easily be reconciled with the violation of the most sacred duty. Elated by the submission of Italy, and the hope of an alliance with the Huns, John presumed to insult, by an embassy, the majesty of the Eastern emperor ; but when he understood that his agents had been banished, imprisoned, and at length chased away with deserved ignominy, John prepared to assert, by arms, the injustice of his claims. In such a cause, the grandson of the great Theodosius should have marched in person : but the young emperor was easily diverted, by his physicians, from so rash and hazardous a design ; and the conduct of the Italian expedition was prudently intrusted to Ardaburius, and his son Aspar, who had already signalized their valour against the Persians. It was resolved, that Ardaburius should embark with the infantry ; whilst Aspar, at the head of the cavalry, conducted Placidia, and her son Valentinian, along the sea-coast of the Hadriatic. The march of the cavalry was performed with such active diligence, that they surprised, without resistance, the important city of Aquileia ; when the hopes of Aspar were unexpectedly confounded by the intelligence, that a storm had dispersed the Imperial fleet ; and that his father, with only two galleys, was taken and carried a prisoner into the port of Ravenna. Yet this incident, unfortunate as it might seem, facilitated the conquest of Italy. Ardaburius employed, or abused, the courteous freedom which he was permitted to enjoy, to revive among the troops a sense of loyalty and gratitude ; and, as soon as the conspiracy was ripe for execution, he invited, by private messages, and pressed the approach of, Aspar. A shepherd guided the Eastern cavalry, by a secret, and, it was thought, an impassable road,

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through the morasses of the Po; the gates of Ravenna, after a short struggle, were thrown open; and the defenceless tyrant was delivered to the mercy, or rather to the cruelty, of the conquerors. His right hand was first cut off; and, after he had been exposed, mounted on an ass, to the public derision, John was beheaded in the circus of Aquileia. The emperor Theodosius, when he received the news of the victory, interrupted the horse-races; and singing, as he marched through the streets, a suitable psalm, conducted his people from the Hippodrome to the church, where he spent the remainder of the day in grateful devotion*.

Valentinian III.
emperor of the West,
A. D. 425
—455.

In a monarchy, which, according to various precedents, might be considered as elective, or hereditary, or patrimonial, it was impossible that the intricate claims of female and collateral succession should be clearly defined; and Theodosius, by the right of consanguinity or conquest, might have reigned the sole legitimate emperor of the Romans. For a moment, perhaps, his eyes were dazzled by the prospect of unbounded sway; but his indolent temper gradually acquiesced in the dictates of sound policy. He contented himself with the possession of the East; and wisely relinquished the laborious task of waging a distant and doubtful war against the Barbarians beyond the Alps; or of securing the obedience of the Italians and Africans, whose minds were alienated by the irreconcilable difference of language and interest. Instead of listening to the voice of ambition, Theodosius resolved to imitate the moderation of his grandfather, and to seat his cousin Valentinian on the throne of the West. The

* For these revolutions of the Western Empire, consult Olympiodor. apud Phot. p. 192, 193, 196, 197, 200. Sozomen, l. ix. c. 16. Socrates, l. vii. 23, 24. Philostorgius, l. xii. c. 10, 11, and Godefroy, Dissertat. p. 486. Procopius, de Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 3. p. 182, 183. Theophanes, in Chronograph. p. 72, 73, and the Chronicles.

royal infant was distinguished at Constantinople by the title of *Nobilissimus*: he was promoted, before his departure from Thessalonica, to the rank and dignity of *Cæsar*; and, after the conquest of Italy, the patrician Helion, by the authority of Theodosius, and in the presence of the senate, saluted Valentinian the third by the name of Augustus, and solemnly invested him with the diadem, and the Imperial purple. By the agreement of the three females who governed the Roman world, the son of Placidia was betrothed to Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius and Athenais; and, as soon as the lover and his bride had attained the age of puberty, this honourable alliance was faithfully accomplished. At the same time, as a compensation, perhaps, for the expenses of the war, the Western Illyricum was detached from the Italian dominions, and yielded to the throne of Constantinople*. The emperor of the East acquired the useful dominion of the rich and maritime province of Dalmatia, and the dangerous sovereignty of Pannonia and Noricum, which had been filled and ravaged above twenty years, by a promiscuous crowd of Huns, Ostrogoths, Vandals, and *Bavarians*. Theodosius and Valentinian continued to respect the obligations of their public and domestic alliance; but the unity of the Roman government was finally dissolved. By a positive declaration, the validity of all future laws was limited to the dominions of their peculiar author; unless he should think proper to communicate them, subscribed with his own hand, for the approbation of his independent colleague.

Valentinian, when he received the title of Augustus, was no more than six years of age: and his

Administra-
tion of his
mother
Placidia,
A. D. 425
—450.

* The Count de Buat (*Hist. des Peuples de l'Europe*, tom. vii. p. 292—300) has established the reality, explained the motives, and traced the consequences of this remarkable cession.

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Her two
generals,
Ætius and
Boniface.

long minority was intrusted to the guardian care of a mother, who might assert a female claim to the succession of the Western empire. Placidia envied, but she could not equal, the reputation and virtues of the wife and sister of Theodosius; the elegant genius of Eudocia, the wise and successful policy of Pulcheria. The mother of Valentinian was jealous of the power which she was incapable of exercising: she reigned twenty-five years, in the name of her son; and the character of that unworthy emperor gradually countenanced the suspicion, that Placidia had enervated his youth by a dissolute education, and studiously diverted his attention from every manly and honourable pursuit. Amidst the decay of military spirit, her armies were commanded by two generals, Ætius and Boniface, who may be deservedly named as the last of the Romans. Their union might have supported a sinking empire; their discord was the fatal and immediate cause of the loss of Africa. The invasion and defeat of Attila have immortalized the fame of Ætius; and though time has thrown a shade over the exploits of his rival, the defence of Marscelles, and the deliverance of Africa, attest the military talents of Count Boniface. In the field of battle, in partial encounters, in single combats, he was still the terror of the Barbarians: the clergy, and particularly his friend Augustin, were edified by the Christian piety, which had once tempted him to retire from the world; the people applauded his spotless integrity; the army dreaded his equal and inexorable justice, which may be displayed in a very singular example. A peasant, who complained of the criminal intimacy between his wife and a Gothic soldier, was directed to attend his tribunal the following day: in the evening the count, who had diligently informed himself of the time and place of the assignation, mounted his horse, rode ten

miles into the country, surprised the guilty couple, punished the soldier with instant death, and silenced the complaints of the husband, by presenting him, the next morning, with the head of the adulterer. The abilities of Ætius and Boniface might have been usefully employed against the public enemies, in separate and important commands; but the experience of their past conduct should have decided the real favour and confidence of the empress Placidia. In the melancholy season of her exile and distress, Boniface alone had maintained her cause with unshaken fidelity; and the troops and treasures of Africa had essentially contributed to extinguish the rebellion. The same rebellion had been supported by the zeal and activity of Ætius, who brought an army of sixty thousand Huns from the Danube to the confines of Italy, for the service of the usurper. The untimely death of John compelled him to accept an advantageous treaty; but he still continued, the subject and the soldier of Valentinian, to entertain a secret, perhaps a treasonable, correspondence with his Barbarian allies, whose retreat had been purchased by liberal gifts, and more liberal promises. But Ætius possessed an advantage of singular moment in a female reign: he was present: he besieged, with artful and assiduous flattery, the palace of Ravenna; disguised his dark designs with the mask of loyalty and friendship; and at length deceived both his mistress and his absent rival, by a subtle conspiracy, which a weak woman, and a brave man, could not easily suspect. He secretly persuaded Placidia to recal Boniface from the government of Africa; he secretly advised Boniface to disobey the Imperial summons: to the one, he represented the other as a sentence of death; to the other, he stated the refusal as a signal of revolt; and when the credulous and unsuspectful count had armed

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Error and
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in Africa,
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the province in his defence, Ætius applauded his sagacity in foreseeing the rebellion, which his own perfidy had excited. A temperate inquiry into the real motives of Boniface would have restored a faithful servant to his duty and to the republic; but the arts of Ætius still continued to betray and to inflame, and the count was urged, by persecution, to embrace the most desperate counsels. The success with which he eluded or repelled the first attacks could not inspire a vain confidence, that, at the head of some loose, disorderly Africans, he should be able to withstand the regular forces of the West, commanded by a rival, whose military character it was impossible for him to despise. After some hesitation, the last struggles of prudence and loyalty, Boniface despatched a trusty friend to the court, or rather to the camp, of Gonderic, king of the Vandals, with the proposal of a strict alliance, and the offer of an advantageous and perpetual settlement.

He invites
the Vandals,
A. D. 428.

After the retreat of the Goths, the authority of Honorius had obtained a precarious establishment in Spain; except only in the province of Galicia, where the Suevi and the Vandals had fortified their camps, in mutual discord, and hostile independence. The Vandals prevailed; and their adversaries were besieged in the Nervasian hills, between Leon and Oviedo, till the approach of Count Asterius compelled, or rather provoked, the victorious Barbarians to remove the scene of the war to the plains of Bœtica. The rapid progress of the Vandals soon required a more effectual opposition; and the master-general Castinus marched against them with a numerous army of Romans and Goths. Vanquished in battle by an inferior enemy, Castinus fled with dishonour to Tarragona; and this memorable defeat, which has been represented as the punishment, was most probably the effect, of his rash presumption. Seville

and Carthagera became the reward, or rather the prey, of the ferocious conquerors ; and the vessels which they found in the harbour of Carthagera, might easily transport them to the isles of Majorca and Minorca, where the Spanish fugitives, as in a secure recess, had vainly concealed their families and their fortunes. The experience of navigation, and perhaps the prospect of Africa, encouraged the Vandals to accept the invitation which they received from Count Boniface ; and the death of Gonderic served only to forward and animate the bold enterprise. In the room of a prince, not conspicuous for any superior powers of the mind or body, they acquired his bastard brother, the terrible Genseric ; a name, which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila. The king of the Vandals is described to have been of a middle stature, with a lameness in one leg, which he had contracted by an accidental fall from his horse. His slow and cautious speech seldom declared the deep purposes of his soul : he disdained to imitate the luxury of the vanquished ; but he indulged the sterner passions of anger and revenge. The ambition of Genseric was without bounds, and without scruples ; and the warrior could dexterously employ the dark engines of policy to solicit the allies who might be useful to his success, or to scatter among his enemies the seeds of hatred and contention. Almost in the moment of his departure he was informed, that Hermanric, king of the Suevi, had presumed to ravage the Spanish territories, which he was resolved to abandon. Impatient of the insult, Genseric pursued the hasty retreat of the Suevi as far as Merida ; precipitated the king and his army into the river Anas, and calmly returned to the sea-shore, to embark his victorious

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Genseric,
king of the
Vandals.

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He lands
in Africa,
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May;

and reviews
his army,
A. D. 429.

troops. The vessels which transported the Vandals over the modern Straits of Gibraltar, a channel only twelve miles in breadth, were furnished by the Spaniards, who anxiously wished their departure; and by the African general, who had implored their formidable assistance.

Our fancy, so long accustomed to exaggerate and multiply the martial swarms of Barbarians that seemed to issue from the North, will perhaps be surprised by the account of the army which Genseric mustered on the coast of Mauritania. The Vandals, who in twenty years had penetrated from the Elbe to Mount Atlas, were united under the command of their warlike king; and he reigned with equal authority over the Alani, who had passed, within the term of human life, from the cold of Scythia to the excessive heat of an African climate. The hopes of the bold enterprise had excited many brave adventurers of the Gothic nation; and many desperate provincials were tempted to repair their fortunes by the same means which had occasioned their ruin. Yet this various multitude amounted only to fifty thousand effective men; and though Genseric artfully magnified his apparent strength, by appointing eighty *chiliarchs*, or commanders of thousands, the fallacious increase of old men, of children, and of slaves, would scarcely have swelled his army to the number of fourscore thousand persons. But his own dexterity, and the discontents of Africa, soon fortified the Vandal powers, by the accession of numerous and active allies. The parts of Mauritania, which border on the great desert, and the Atlantic ocean, were filled with a fierce and untractable race of men, whose savage temper had been exasperated, rather than reclaimed, by their dread of the Roman arms. The wandering Moors, as they gradually ventured to

The Moors.

approach the sea-shore, and the camp of the Vandals, must have viewed with terror and astonishment the dress, the armour, the martial pride and discipline of the unknown strangers, who had landed on their coast; and the fair complexions of the blue-eyed warriors of Germany formed a very singular contrast with the swarthy or olive hue, which is derived from the neighbourhood of the torrid zone. After the first difficulties had in some measure been removed, which arose from the mutual ignorance of their respective language, the Moors, regardless of any future consequence, embraced the alliance of the enemies of Rome; and a crowd of naked savages rushed from the woods and valleys of Mount Atlas, to satiate their revenge on the polished tyrants, who had injuriously expelled them from the native sovereignty of the land.

The court and the people were astonished by the strange intelligence, that a virtuous hero, after so many favours, and so many services, had renounced his allegiance, and invited the Barbarians to destroy the province intrusted to his command. The friends of Boniface, who still believed that his criminal behaviour might be excused by some honourable motive, solicited, during the absence of Ætius, a free conference with the Count of Africa; and Darius, an officer of high distinction, was named for the important embassy. In their first interview at Carthage, the imaginary provocations were mutually explained; the opposite letters of Ætius were produced and compared; and the fraud was easily detected. Placidia and Boniface lamented their fatal error; and the count had sufficient magnanimity to confide in the forgiveness of his sovereign, or to expose his head to her future resentment. His repentance was fervent and sincere; but he soon discovered that it was no longer in his power to restore the edifice

Tardy re-
pentance of
Boniface,
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which he had shaken to its foundations. Carthage, and the Roman garrisons, returned with their general to the allegiance of Valentinian; but the rest of Africa was still distracted with war and faction; and the inexorable king of the Vandals, disdaining all terms of accommodation, sternly refused to relinquish the possession of his prey. The band of veterans, who marched under the standard of Boniface, and his hasty levies of provincial troops, were defeated with considerable loss: the victorious Barbarians insulted the open country; and Carthage, Cirta, and Hippo Regius, were the only cities that appeared to rise above the general inundation.

Desolation
of Africa.

The long and narrow tract of the African coast was filled with frequent monuments of Roman art and magnificence; and the respective degrees of improvement might be accurately measured by the distance from Carthage and the Mediterranean. A simple reflection will impress every thinking mind with the clearest idea of fertility and cultivation: the country was extremely populous; the inhabitants reserved a liberal subsistence for their own use; and the annual exportation, particularly of wheat, was so regular and plentiful, that Africa deserved the name of the common granary of Rome and of mankind. On a sudden, the seven fruitful provinces, from Tangier to Tripoli, were overwhelmed by the invasion of the Vandals; whose destructive rage has perhaps been exaggerated by popular animosity, religious zeal, and extravagant declamation. War, in its fairest form, implies a perpetual violation of humanity and justice; and the hostilities of Barbarians are inflamed by the fierce and lawless spirit which incessantly disturbs their peaceful and domestic society. The Vandals, where they found resistance, seldom gave quarter; and the deaths of their valiant countrymen were expiated by the ruin of the cities under

whose walls they had fallen. Careless of the distinctions of age, or sex, or rank, they employed every species of indignity and torture, to force from the captives a discovery of their hidden wealth. The stern policy of Genseric justified his frequent examples of military execution : he was not always the master of his own passions, or of those of his followers ; and the calamities of war were aggravated by the licentiousness of the Moors, and the fanaticism of the Donatists. Yet I shall not easily be persuaded, that it was the common practice of the Vandals to extirpate the olives, and other fruit trees, of a country where they intended to settle ; nor can I believe that it was a usual stratagem to slaughter great numbers of their prisoners before the walls of a besieged city, for the sole purpose of infecting the air, and producing a pestilence, of which they themselves must have been the first victims.

The generous mind of Count Boniface was tortured by the exquisite distress of beholding the ruin, which he had occasioned, and whose rapid progress he was unable to check. After the loss of a battle, he retired into Hippo Regius ; where he was immediately besieged by an enemy, who considered him as the real bulwark of Africa. The maritime colony of *Hippo*, about two hundred miles westward of Carthage, had formerly acquired the distinguishing epithet of *Regius*, from the residence of Numidian kings ; and some remains of trade and populousness still adhere to the modern city, which is known in Europe by the corrupted name of Bona. The military labours, and anxious reflections, of Count Boniface, were alleviated by the edifying conversation of his friend St. Augustin ; till that bishop, the light and pillar of the Catholic church, was gently released, in the third month of the siege, and in the seventysixth year of his age, from the actual and the im-

Siege of
Hippo,
A. D. 430,
May.

Death of
St. Au-
gustin,
A. D. 430.
Aug. 28.

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Defeat and
retreat of
Boniface,
A. D. 431.

By the skill of Boniface, and perhaps by the ignorance of the Vandals, the siege of Hippo was protracted above fourteen months : the sea was continually open ; and when the adjacent country had been exhausted by irregular rapine, the besiegers themselves were compelled by famine to relinquish their enterprise. The importance and danger of Africa were deeply felt by the regent of the West. Placidia implored the assistance of her eastern ally ; and the Italian fleet and army were reinforced by Aspar, who sailed from Constantinople with a powerful armament. As soon as the force of the two empires was united under the command of Boniface, he boldly marched against the Vandals ; and the loss of a second battle irretrievably decided the fate of Africa. He embarked with the precipitation of despair ; and the people of Hippo were permitted, with their families and effects, to occupy the vacant place of the soldiers, the greatest part of whom were either slain or made prisoners by the Vandals. The count, whose fatal credulity had wounded the vitals of the

republic, might enter the palace of Ravenna with some anxiety, which was soon removed by the smiles of Placidia. Boniface accepted with gratitude the rank of patrician, and the dignity of master-general of the Roman armies; but he must have blushed at the sight of those medals, in which he was represented with the name and attributes of victory. The discovery of his fraud, the displeasure of the empress, and the distinguished favour of his rival, exasperated the haughty and perfidious soul of Ætius. He hastily returned from Gaul to Italy, with a retinue, or rather with an army, of Barbarian followers; and such was the weakness of the government, that the two generals decided their private quarrel in a bloody battle. Boniface was successful; but he received in the conflict a mortal wound from the spear of his adversary, of which he expired within a few days. Ætius was proclaimed a rebel by the justice of Placidia; and though he attempted to defend some strong fortresses erected on his patrimonial estate, the Imperial power soon compelled him to retire into Pannonia, to the tents of his faithful Huns. The republic was deprived, by their mutual discord, of the service of her two most illustrious champions.

His death,
A. D. 432.

It might naturally be expected, after the retreat of Boniface, that the Vandals would achieve, without resistance or delay, the conquest of Africa. Eight years however elapsed, from the evacuation of Hippo to the reduction of Carthage. In the midst of that interval, the ambitious Genseric, in the full tide of apparent prosperity, negotiated a treaty of peace, by which he gave his son Hunneric for a hostage; and consented to leave the Western emperor in the undisturbed possession of the three Mauritanias. This moderation, which cannot be imputed to the justice, must be ascribed to the policy, of the conqueror. His throne was encompassed with domestic enemies; who

Progress of
the Vandals
in Africa,
A. D. 431
—439.

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accused the baseness of his birth, and asserted the legitimate claims of his nephews, the sons of Gonderic. Those nephews, indeed, he sacrificed to his safety; and their mother, the widow of the deceased king, was precipitated, by his order, into the river Ampsaga. But the public discontent burst forth in dangerous and frequent conspiracies; and the war-like tyrant is supposed to have shed more Vandal blood by the hand of the executioner than in the field of battle. The convulsions of Africa, which had favoured his attack, opposed the firm establishment of his power; and the various seditions of the Moors and Germans, the Donatists and Catholics, continually disturbed, or threatened, the unsettled reign of the conqueror. As he advanced towards Carthage, he was forced to withdraw his troops from the Western provinces; the sea-coast was exposed to the naval enterprises of the Romans of Spain and Italy; and, in the heart of Numidia, the strong inland city of Corta still persisted in obstinate independence*. These difficulties were gradually subdued by the spirit, the perseverance, and the cruelty of Genseric; who alternately applied the arts of peace and war to the establishment of his African kingdom. He subscribed a solemn treaty, with the hope of deriving some advantage from the term of its continuance, and the moment of its violation. The vigilance of his enemies was relaxed by the protestations of friendship, which concealed his hostile approach; and Carthage was at length surprised by the Vandals, five hundred and eighty-five years after the destruction of the city and republic, by the younger Scipio.

They surprise Carthage,
A. D. 439.
Oct. 9.

A new city had arisen from its ruins, with the title of a colony; and though Carthage might yield to the royal prerogatives of Constantinople, and per-

* Possidius, in Vit. Augustin, c. 28. apud Ruinart. p. 428.

haps to the trade of Alexandria, or the splendour of Antioch, she still maintained the second rank in the West ; as the *Rome* (if we may use the style of contemporaries) of the African world. That wealthy and opulent metropolis displayed, in a dependent condition, the image of a flourishing republic. Carthage contained the manufactures, the arms, and the treasures of the six provinces. A regular subordination of civil honours gradually ascended from the procurators of the streets and quarters of the city, to the tribunal of the supreme magistrate, who, with the title of proconsul, represented the state and dignity of a consul of ancient Rome. Schools and *gymnasia* were instituted for the education of the African youth ; and the liberal arts and manners, grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy, were publicly taught in the Greek and Latin languages. The buildings of Carthage were uniform and magnificent : a shady grove was planted in the midst of the capital ; the *new* port, a secure and capacious harbour, was subservient to the commercial industry of citizens and strangers ; and the splendid games of the circus and theatre were exhibited almost in the presence of the Barbarians. The reputation of the Carthaginians was not equal to that of their country, and the reproach of Punic faith still adhered to their subtle and faithless character. The habits of trade, and the abuse of luxury, had corrupted their manners. The king of the Vandals severely reformed the vices of a voluptuous people ; and the ancient, noble, ingenuous freedom of Carthage (these expressions of Victor are not without energy), was reduced by Genseric into a state of ignominious servitude. After he had permitted his licentious troops to satiate their rage and avarice, he instituted a more regular system of rapine and oppression. An edict was promulgated, which enjoined all persons, without fraud or delay, to deliver

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exiles and
captives.

their gold, silver, jewels, and valuable furniture or apparel, to the royal officers; and the attempt to secrete any part of their patrimony was inexorably punished with death and torture, as an act of treason against the state. The lands of the proconsular province, which formed the immediate district of Carthage, were accurately measured, and divided among the Barbarians; and the conqueror reserved for his peculiar domain the fertile territory of Byzacium, and the adjacent parts of Numidia and Getulia*.

It was natural enough that Genseric should hate those whom he had injured: the nobility and senators of Carthage were exposed to his jealousy and resentment; and all those who refused the ignominious terms, which their honour and religion forbade them to accept, were compelled by the Arian tyrant to embrace the condition of perpetual banishment. Rome, Italy, and the provinces of the East, were filled with a crowd of exiles, of fugitives, and of ingenuous captives, who solicited the public compassion: and the benevolent epistles of Theodoret still preserve the names and misfortunes of Cælestian and Maria†. The Syrian bishop deploras the misfortunes of Cælestian, who, from the state of a noble and opulent senator of Carthage, was reduced, with his wife and family, and servants, to beg his bread in a foreign country; but he applauds the resignation of the Christian exile, and the philosophic temper, which, under the pressure of such calamities, could enjoy more real happiness than was the ordinary lot of wealth and prosperity. The story of Maria, the daughter of the magnificent Eudæmon, is singular and interesting. In the sack of Carthage, she was purchased from the Vandals by some merchants of

* Compare Procopius de Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 5. p. 189, 190; and Victor Vitensis, de Persecut. Vandal. l. i. c. 4.

† Ruinart (p. 444—457) has collected from Theodoret, and other authors, the misfortunes, real and fabulous, of the inhabitants of Carthage.

Syria, who afterwards sold her as a slave in their native country. A female attendant, transported in the same ship, and sold in the same family, still continued to respect a mistress whom fortune had reduced to the common level of servitude ; and the daughter of Eudæmon received from her grateful affection the domestic services, which she had once required from her obedience. This remarkable behaviour divulged the real condition of Maria, who, in the absence of the bishop of Cyrrhus, was redeemed from slavery by the generosity of some soldiers of the garrison. The liberality of Theodoret provided for her decent maintenance ; and she passed ten months among the deaconesses of the church ; till she was unexpectedly informed, that her father, who had escaped from the ruin of Carthage, exercised an honourable office in one of the Western provinces. Her filial impatience was seconded by the pious bishop : Theodoret, in a letter still extant, recommends Maria to the bishop of Ægæ, a maritime city of Cilicia, which was frequented, during the annual fair, by the vessels of the West ; most earnestly requesting, that his colleague would use the maiden with a tenderness suitable to her birth ; and that he would intrust her to the care of such faithful merchants, as would esteem it a sufficient gain, if they restored a daughter, lost beyond all human hope, to the arms of her afflicted parent.

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The Character, Conquests, and Court of Attila, King of the Huns.—Death of Theodosius the Younger.—Elevation of Marcian to the Empire of the East.

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The Huns,
A. D. 376
—433.

THE western world was oppressed by the Goths and Vandals, who fled before the Huns; but the achievements of the Huns themselves were not adequate to their power and prosperity. Their victorious hordes had spread from the Volga to the Danube; but the public force was exhausted by the discord of independent chieftains; their valour was idly consumed in obscure and predatory excursions; and they often degraded their national dignity, by condescending, for the hopes of spoil, to enlist under the banners of their fugitive enemies. In the reign of ATTILA, the Huns again became the terror of the world; and I shall now describe the character and actions of that formidable Barbarian; who alternately insulted and invaded the East and the West, and urged the rapid downfall of the Roman empire.

Their establishment
in modern
Hungary.

In the tide of emigration, which impetuously rolled from the confines of China to those of Germany, the most powerful and populous tribes may commonly be found on the verge of the Roman provinces. The accumulated weight was sustained for a while by artificial barriers; and the easy condescension of the emperors invited, without satisfying, the insolent demands of the Barbarians, who had acquired an eager appetite for the luxuries of civilized life. The Hungarians, who ambitiously insert the name of Attila among their native kings, may affirm with truth, that the hordes, which were subject to his uncle Roas, or Rugilas, had formed their encampments within the

limits of modern Hungary*, in a fertile country, which liberally supplied the wants of a nation of hunters and shepherds. In this advantageous situation, Rugilas, and his valiant brothers, who continually added to their power and reputation, commanded the alternative of peace or war with the two empires. His alliance with the Romans of the West was cemented by his personal friendship for the great Ætius; who was always secure of finding in the Barbarian camp a hospitable reception, and a powerful support. At his solicitation, and in the name of John the usurper, sixty thousand Huns advanced to the confines of Italy; their march and their retreat were alike expensive to the state; and the grateful policy of Ætius abandoned the possession of Pannonia to his faithful confederates. The Romans of the East were not less apprehensive of the arms of Rugilas, which threatened the provinces, or even the capital. But Theodosius was reduced to the humble expedient of stipulating an annual payment of three hundred and fifty pounds of gold, and of disguising this dishonourable tribute by the title of general, which the king of the Huns condescended to accept. The public tranquillity was frequently interrupted by the fierce impatience of the Barbarians, and the perfidious intrigues of the Byzantine court. Four dependent nations, among whom we may distinguish the Bavarians, disclaimed the sovereignty of the Huns; and their revolt was encouraged and protected by a Roman alliance; till the just claims, and formidable power, of Rugilas, were effectually urged

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* Hungary has been successively occupied by three Scythian colonies. 1. The Huns of Attila; 2. The Abares, in the sixth century; and; 3. The Turks of Magiars, A. D. 889; the immediate and genuine ancestors of the modern Hungarians, whose connexion with the two former is extremely faint and remote. The *Prodromus* and *Notitia* of Matthew Belius appear to contain a rich fund of information concerning ancient and modern Hungary. I have seen the extracts in *Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne*, tom. xxii. p. 1—51, and *Bibliothèque Raisonné*, tom. xvi. p. 127—175.

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Reign of
Attila,
A. D. 433
—453.

by the voice of Eslaw his ambassador. Peace was the unanimous wish of the senate: their decree was ratified by the emperor; and two ambassadors were named, Plinthas, a general of Scythian extraction, but of consular rank; and the quæstor Epigenes, a wise and experienced statesman, who was recommended to that office by his ambitious colleague.

The death of Rugilas suspended the progress of the treaty. His two nephews, Attila and Bleda, who succeeded to the throne of their uncle, consented to a personal interview with the ambassadors of Constantinople; but as they proudly refused to dismount, the business was transacted on horseback, in a spacious plain in the city of Margus, in the Upper Mæsia. The kings of the Huns assumed the solid benefits, as well as the vain honours, of the negotiation. They dictated the conditions of peace, and each condition was an insult on the majesty of the empire. Besides the freedom of a safe and plentiful market on the banks of the Danube, they required that the annual contribution should be augmented from three hundred and fifty to seven hundred pounds of gold; that a fine, or ransom, of eight pieces of gold, should be paid for every Roman captive, who had escaped from his Barbarian master; that the emperor should renounce all treaties and engagements with the enemies of the Huns; and that all the fugitives, who had taken refuge in the court, or provinces, of Theodosius, should be delivered to the justice of their offended sovereign. This justice was rigorously inflicted on some unfortunate youths of a royal race. They were crucified on the territories of the empire, by the command of Attila: and, as soon as the king of the Huns had impressed the Romans with the terror of his name, he indulged them in a short and arbitrary respite, whilst he subdued the rebellious or independent nations of Scythia and Germany.

Attila, the son of Mundzuk, deduced his noble, perhaps his regal, descent from the ancient Huns, who had formerly contended with the monarchs of China. His features, according to the observation of a Gothic historian, bore the stamp of his national origin; and the portrait of Attila exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Calmuck; a large head, a swarthy complexion, small deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short square body, of nervous strength, though of a disproportioned form. The haughty step and demeanour of the king of the Huns expressed the consciousness of his superiority above the rest of mankind; and he had a custom of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he inspired. Yet this savage hero was not inaccessible to pity: his suppliant enemies might confide in the assurance of peace or pardon; and Attila was considered by his subjects as a just and indulgent master. He delighted in war; but, after he had ascended the throne in a mature age, his head, rather than his hand, achieved the conquest of the North; and the fame of an adventurous soldier was usefully exchanged for that of a prudent and successful general. The effects of personal valour are so inconsiderable, except in poetry or romance, that victory, even among Barbarians, must depend on the degree of skill with which the passions of the multitude are combined and guided for the service of a single man. The Scythian conquerors, Attila and Zingis, surpassed their rude countrymen in art, rather than in courage; and it may be observed, that the monarchies, both of the Huns and of the Moguls, were erected by their founders on the basis of popular superstition. The religious arts of Attila were not less skilfully adapted to the character of his age

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and cha-
racter.

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He discovers the sword of Mars,

and country. It was natural enough that the Scythians should adore, with peculiar devotion, the god of war; but as they were incapable of forming either an abstract idea, or a corporeal representation, they worshipped their tutelar deity under the symbol of an iron cimeter. One of the shepherds of the Huns perceived, that a heifer, who was grazing, had wounded herself in the foot, and curiously followed the track of the blood, till he discovered, among the long grass, the point of an ancient sword; which he dug out of the ground, and presented to Attila. That magnanimous, or rather that artful, prince accepted, with pious gratitude, this celestial favour; and, as the rightful possessor of the *sword of Mars*, asserted his divine and indefeasible claim to the dominion of the earth. If the rites of Scythia were practised on this solemn occasion, a lofty altar, or rather pile of faggots, three hundred yards in length and in breadth, was raised in a spacious plain; and the sword of Mars was placed erect on the summit of this rustic altar, which was annually consecrated by the blood of sheep, horses, and of the hundredth captive. Whether human sacrifices formed any part of the worship of Attila, or whether he propitiated the god of war with the victims which he continually offered in the field of battle, the favourite of Mars soon acquired a sacred character, which rendered his conquests more easy, and more permanent; and the Barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion or flattery, that they could not presume to gaze, with a steady eye, on the divine majesty of the king of the Huns. His brother Bleda, who reigned over a considerable part of the nation, was compelled to resign his sceptre, and his life. Yet even this cruel act was attributed to a supernatural impulse; and the vigour with which Attila wielded the sword of

Mars convinced the world that it had been reserved alone for his invincible arm*. But the extent of his empire affords the only remaining evidence of the number, and importance, of his victories; and the Scythian monarch, however ignorant of the value of science and philosophy, might, perhaps, lament, that his illiterate subjects were destitute of the art which could perpetuate the memory of his exploits.

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If a line of separation were drawn between the civilized and the savage climates of the globe; between the inhabitants of cities, who cultivated the earth, and the hunters and shepherds, who dwelt in tents; Attila might aspire to the title of supreme and sole monarch of the Barbarians. He alone, among the conquerors of ancient and modern times, united the two mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia; and those vague appellations, when they are applied to his reign, may be understood with an ample latitude. Thuringia, which stretched beyond its actual limits as far as the Danube, was in the number of his provinces: he interposed, with the weight of a powerful neighbour, in the domestic affairs of the Franks; and one of his lieutenants chastised, and almost exterminated, the Burgundians of the Rhine. He subdued the islands of the ocean, the kingdoms of Scandinavia, encompassed and divided by the waters of the Baltic; and the Huns might derive a tribute of furs from that northern region, which has been protected from all other conquerors by the severity of the climate, and the courage of the natives. Towards the East, it is difficult to circumscribe the dominion of Attila over the Scythian deserts; yet we may be assured that he reigned on the banks of the Volga; that the king of the Huns

and acquires
the empire
of Scythia
and Ger-
many.

* The count de Buat (*Hist. des Peuples de l'Europe*, tom. vii. p. 428, 429) attempts to clear Attila from the murder of his brother; and is almost inclined to reject the concurrent testimony of Jornandes, and the contemporary Chronicles.

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was dreaded, not only as a warrior, but as a magician ; that he insulted and vanquished the Khan of the formidable Geougen ; and that he sent ambassadors to negotiate an equal alliance with the empire of China. In the proud review of the nations who acknowledged the sovereignty of Attila, and who never entertained, during his life-time, the thought of a revolt, the Gepidæ and the Ostrogoths were distinguished by their numbers, their bravery, and the personal merit of their chiefs. The renowned Ardaric, king of the Gepidæ, was the faithful and sagacious counsellor of the monarch, who esteemed his intrepid genius, whilst he loved the mild and discreet virtues of the noble Walamir, king of the Ostrogoths. The crowd of vulgar kings, the leaders of so many martial tribes, who served under the standard of Attila, were ranged in the submissive order of guards and domestics, round the person of their master. They watched his nod ; they trembled at his frown ; and at the first signal of his will, they executed, without murmur or hesitation, his stern and absolute commands. In time of peace, the dependent princes, with their national troops, attended the royal camp in regular succession ; but when Attila collected his military force, he was able to bring into the field an army of five, or, according to another account, of seven hundred thousand Barbarians.

The Huns
invade
Persia,
A. D. 430
—440.

The ambassadors of the Huns might awaken the attention of Theodosius, by reminding him, that they were his neighbours both in Europe and Asia ; since they touched the Danube on one hand, and reached, with the other, as far as the Tanais. In the reign of his father Arcadius, a band of adventurous Huns had ravaged the provinces of the East ; from whence they brought away rich spoils and innumerable captives. They advanced, by a secret path, along the shores of the Caspian sea ; traversed

the snowy mountain of Armenia; passed the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Halys; recruited their weary cavalry with the generous breed of Cappadocian horses; occupied the hilly country of Cilicia, and disturbed the festal songs, and dances, of the citizens of Antioch. Egypt trembled at their approach; and the monks and pilgrims of the Holy Land prepared to escape their fury by a speedy embarkation. The memory of this invasion was still recent in the minds of the Orientals. The subjects of Attila might execute, with superior forces, the design which these adventurers had so boldly attempted; and it soon became the subject of anxious conjecture, whether the tempest would fall on the dominions of Rome, or of Persia. Some of the great vassals of the king of the Huns, who were themselves in the rank of powerful princes, had been sent to ratify an alliance and society of arms with the emperor, or rather with the general, of the West. They related, during their residence at Rome, the circumstances of an expedition, which they had lately made into the East. After passing a desert and a morass, supposed by the Romans to be the lake Mæotis, they penetrated through the mountains, and arrived, at the end of fifteen days march, on the confines of Media; where they advanced as far as the unknown cities of Basic and Cursic. They encountered the Persian army in the plains of Media; and the air, according to their own expression, was darkened by a cloud of arrows. But the Huns were obliged to retire before the numbers of the enemy. Their laborious retreat was effected by a different road; they lost the greatest part of their booty; and at length returned to the royal camp, with some knowledge of the country, and an impatient desire of revenge. In the free conversation of the Imperial ambassadors, who discussed, at the court of Attila, the character and

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designs of their formidable enemy, the ministers of Constantinople expressed their hope, that his strength might be diverted and employed in a long and doubtful contest with the princes of the house of Sassan. The more sagacious Italians admonished their Eastern brethren of the folly and danger of such a hope, and convinced them, *that* the Medes and Persians were incapable of resisting the arms of the Huns; and *that* the easy and important acquisition would exalt the pride, as well as power, of the conqueror. Instead of contenting himself with a moderate contribution, and a military title, which equalled him only to the generals of Theodosius, Attila would proceed to impose a disgraceful and intolerable yoke on the necks of the prostrate and captive Romans, who would then be encompassed, on all sides, by the empire of the Huns*.

They at-
tack the
Eastern
empire,
A. D. 441,
&c. ;

While the powers of Europe and Asia were solicitous to avert the impending danger, the alliance of Attila maintained the Vandals in the possession of Africa. An enterprise had been concerted between the courts of Ravenna and Constantinople, for the recovery of that valuable province; and the ports of Sicily were already filled with the military and naval forces of Theodosius. But the subtle Genseric, who spread his negotiations round the world, prevented their designs, by exciting the king of the Huns to invade the Eastern empire; and a trifling incident soon became the motive, or pretence, of a destructive war. Under the faith of the treaty of Margus, a free market was held on the northern side of the Danube, which was protected by a Roman fortress, surnamed Constantia. A troop of Barbarians violated the commercial security, killed or dispersed the unsuspecting traders, and levelled the fortress with the ground. The Huns justified this outrage

* See the original conversation in Priscus, p. 64, 65.

as an act of reprisal ; alleged that the bishop of Margus had entered their territories to discover and steal a secret treasure of their kings ; and sternly demanded the guilty prelate, the sacrilegious spoil, and the fugitive subjects, who had escaped from the justice of Attila. The refusal of the Byzantine court was the signal of war ; and the Mæsiens at first applauded the generous firmness of their sovereign. But they were soon intimidated by the destruction of Viminia-cum and the adjacent towns ; and the people was persuaded to adopt the convenient maxim, that a private citizen, however innocent or respectable, may be justly sacrificed to the safety of his country. The bishop of Margus, who did not possess the spirit of a martyr, resolved to prevent the designs which he suspected. He boldly treated with the princes of the Huns ; secured, by solemn oaths, his pardon and reward ; posted a numerous detachment of Barbarians, in silent ambush, on the banks of the Danube ; and, at the appointed hour, opened, with his own hand, the gates of his episcopal city. This advantage, which had been obtained by treachery, served as a prelude to more honourable and decisive victories. The Illyrian frontier was covered by a line of castles and fortresses ; and though the greatest part of them consisted only of a single tower, with a small garrison, they were commonly sufficient to repel, or to intercept, the inroads of an enemy, who was ignorant of the art, and impatient of the delay, of a regular siege. But these slight obstacles were instantly swept away by the inundation of the Huns. They destroyed, with fire and sword, the populous cities of Sirmium and Singidunum, of Ratiaria and Marcianapolis, of Naissus and Sardica ; where every circumstance, in the discipline of the people, and the construction of the buildings, had been gradually adapted to the sole

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and ravage
Europe as
far as Con-
stantinople.

purpose of defence. The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Hadriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of Barbarians whom Attila led into the field. The public danger and distress could not, however, provoke Theodosius to interrupt his amusements, or to appear in person at the head of the Roman legions. But the troops, which had been sent against Genseric, were hastily recalled from Sicily; the garrisons, on the side of Persia, were exhausted; and a military force was collected in Europe, formidable by their arms and numbers, if the generals had understood the science of command, and their soldiers the duty of obedience. The armies of the Eastern empire were vanquished in three successive engagements; and the progress of Attila may be traced by the fields of battle. The two former, on the banks of the Utus, and under the walls of Marcianapolis, were fought in the extensive plains between the Danube and Mount Hæmus. As the Romans were pressed by a victorious enemy, they gradually, and unskilfully, retired towards the Chersonesus of Thrace; and that narrow peninsula, the last extremity of the land, was marked by their third, and irreparable, defeat. By the destruction of this army, Attila acquired the indisputable possession of the field. From the Hellespont to Thermopylæ, and the suburbs of Constantinople, he ravaged, without resistance, and without mercy, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia. Heraclea and Hadrianople might, perhaps, escape this dreadful irruption of the Huns; but the words, the most expressive of total extirpation and erasure, are applied to the calamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of the Eastern empire. Theodosius, his court, and the unwarlike people, were protected by the walls of Constantinople;

but those walls had been shaken by a recent earthquake, and the fall of fifty-eight towers had opened a large and tremendous breach. The damage indeed was speedily repaired; but this accident was aggravated by a superstitious fear, that Heaven itself had delivered the Imperial city to the shepherds of Scythia, who were strangers to the laws, the language, and the religion, of the Romans.

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In all their invasions of the civilized empires of the South, the Scythian shepherds have been uniformly actuated by a savage and destructive spirit. The laws of war, that restrain the exercise of national rapine and murder, are founded on two principles of substantial interest; the knowledge of the permanent benefits which may be obtained by a moderate use of conquest; and a just apprehension, lest the desolation which we inflict on the enemy's country may be retaliated on our own. But these considerations of hope and fear are almost unknown in the pastoral state of nations. The Huns of Attila may, without injustice, be compared to the Moguls and Tartars, before their primitive manners were changed by religion and luxury; and the evidence of Oriental history may reflect some light on the short and imperfect annals of Rome. After the Moguls had subdued the northern provinces of China, it was seriously proposed, not in the hour of victory and passion, but in calm deliberate council, to exterminate all the inhabitants of that populous country, that the vacant land might be converted to the pasture of cattle. The firmness of a Chinese mandarin, who insinuated some principles of rational policy into the mind of Zingis, diverted him from the execution of this horrid design. But in the cities of Asia, which yielded to the Moguls, the inhuman abuse of the rights of war was exercised, with a regular form of discipline, which may, with equal reason, though not with equal authority, be

The Scy-
thian, or
Tartar
wars.

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imputed to the victorious Huns. The inhabitants, who had submitted to their discretion, were ordered to evacuate their houses, and to assemble in some plain adjacent to the city; where a division was made of the vanquished into three parts. The first class consisted of the soldiers of the garrison, and of the young men capable of bearing arms; and their fate was instantly decided: they were either enlisted among the Moguls, or they were massacred on the spot by the troops, who, with pointed spears and bended bows, had formed a circle round the captive multitude. The second class, composed of the young and beautiful women, of the artificers of every rank and profession, and of the more wealthy or honourable citizens, from whom a private ransom might be expected, was distributed in equal or proportionable lots. The remainder, whose life or death was alike useless to the conquerors, were permitted to return to the city; which, in the meanwhile, had been stripped of its valuable furniture; and a tax was imposed on those wretched inhabitants for the indulgence of breathing their native air. Such was the behaviour of the Moguls, when they were not conscious of any extraordinary rigour*. But the most casual provocation, the slightest motive, of caprice or convenience, often provoked them to involve a whole people in an indiscriminate massacre: and the ruin of some flourishing cities was executed with such unrelenting perseverance, that, according to their own expression, horses might run, without stumbling, over the ground where they had once stood. The three great capitals of Khorasan, Maru, Neisabour, and Herat, were destroyed by the armies of Zingis; and the exact account, which was taken of the slain,

* Particular instances would be endless; but the curious reader may consult the life of Gengiscan, by Petit de la Croix, the *Histoire des Mongous*, and the fifteenth book of the History of the Huns.

amounted to four millions three hundred and forty-seven thousand persons. Timur, or Tamerlane, was educated in a less barbarous age, and in the profession of the Mahometan religion: yet, if Attila equalled the hostile ravages of Tamerlane, either the Tartar or the Hun might deserve the epithet of the SCOURGE OF GOD.

It may be affirmed, with bolder assurance, that the Huns depopulated the provinces of the empire, by the number of Roman subjects whom they led away into captivity. In the hands of a wise legislator, such an industrious colony might have contributed to diffuse, through the deserts of Scythia, the rudiments of the useful and ornamental arts; but these captives, who had been taken in war, were accidentally dispersed among the hordes that obeyed the empire of Attila. The estimate of their respective value was formed by the simple judgment of unenlightened and unprejudiced Barbarians. Yet they respected the ministers of every religion; and the active zeal of the Christian missionaries, without approaching the person, or the palace, of the monarch, successfully laboured in the propagation of the gospel. The pastoral tribes, who were ignorant of the distinction of landed property, must have disregarded the use as well as the abuse of civil jurisprudence; and the skill of an eloquent lawyer could excite only their contempt, or their abhorrence. The perpetual intercourse of the Huns and the Goths had communicated the familiar knowledge of the two national dialects; and the Barbarians were ambitious of conversing in Latin, the military idiom, even of the Eastern empire. But they disdained the language, and the sciences, of the Greeks; and the vain sophist, or grave philosopher, who had enjoyed the flattering applause of the schools, was mortified to find, that his robust servant was a captive of more value and im-

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the captives.

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portance than himself. The mechanic arts were encouraged and esteemed, as they tended to satisfy the wants of the Huns. An architect, in the service of Onegesius, one of the favourites of Attila, was employed to construct a bath; but this work was a rare example of private luxury; and the trades of the smith, the carpenter, the armourer, were much more adapted to supply a wandering people with the useful instruments of peace and war. But the merit of the physician was received with universal favour and respect; the Barbarians, who despised death, might be apprehensive of disease; and the haughty conqueror trembled in the presence of a captive, to whom he ascribed, perhaps, an imaginary power, of prolonging, or preserving, his life*. The Huns might be provoked to insult the misery of their slaves, over whom they exercised a despotic command; but their manners were not susceptible of a refined system of oppression; and the efforts of courage and diligence were often recompensed by the gift of freedom. The historian Priscus, whose embassy is a source of curious instruction, was accosted, in the camp of Attila, by a stranger, who saluted him in the Greek language, but whose dress and figure displayed the appearance of a wealthy Scythian. In the siege of Viminacum, he had lost, according to his own account, his fortune and liberty: he became the slave of Onegesius; but his faithful services, against the Romans and the Acatzires, had gradually raised him to the rank of the native Huns; to whom he was attached by the domestic pledges of a new wife and several children. The spoils of war had restored and improved his private property; he was admitted to the table of his former lord; and the apostate Greek blessed the hour

* Philip de Comines, in his admirable picture of the last moments of Lewis XI. (*Memoires*, l. vi. c. 12), represents the insolence of his physician, who, in five months, extorted 54,000 crowns, and a rich bishopric, from the stern avaricious tyrant.

of his captivity, since it had been the introduction to a happy and independent state; which he held by the honourable tenure of military service. This reflection naturally produced a dispute on the advantages, and defects, of the Roman government, which was severely arraigned by the apostate, and defended by Priscus in a prolix and feeble declamation. The freedman of Onegesius exposed, in true and lively colours, the vices of a declining empire, of which he had so long been the victim; the cruel absurdity of the Roman princes, unable to protect their subjects against the public enemy, unwilling to trust them with arms for their own defence; the intolerable weight of taxes, rendered still more oppressive by the intricate or arbitrary modes of collection; the obscurity of numerous and contradictory laws; the tedious and expensive forms of judicial proceedings; the partial administration of justice; and the universal corruption, which increased the influence of the rich, and aggravated the misfortunes of the poor. A sentiment of patriotic sympathy was at length revived in the breast of the fortunate exile; and he lamented, with a flood of tears, the guilt or weakness of those magistrates, who had perverted the wisest and most salutary institutions.

The timid, or selfish, policy of the Western Romans had abandoned the Eastern empire to the Huns. The loss of armies, and the want of discipline, or virtue, were not supplied by the personal character of the monarch. Theodosius might still affect the style, as well as the title, of *Invincible Augustus*; but he was reduced to solicit the clemency of Attila, who imperiously dictated these harsh and humiliating conditions of peace. I. The emperor of the East resigned, by an express or tacit convention, an extensive and important territory, which stretched along the southern banks of the Danube, from Singidunum or

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Treaty of
peace be-
tween Attila
and the
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empire,
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Belgrade, as far as Novæ, in the diocese of Thrace. The breadth was defined by the vague computation of fifteen days' journey; but, from the proposal of Attila to remove the situation of the national market, it soon appeared, that he comprehended the ruined city of Naissus within the limits of his dominions. II. The king of the Huns required and obtained, that his tribute or subsidy should be augmented from seven hundred pounds of gold to the annual sum of two thousand one hundred; and he stipulated the immediate payment of six thousand pounds of gold to defray the expenses, or to expiate the guilt, of the war. One might imagine, that such a demand, which scarcely equalled the measure of private wealth, would have been readily discharged by the opulent empire of the East; and the public distress affords a remarkable proof of the impoverished, or at least of the disorderly, state of the finances. A large proportion of the taxes, extorted from the people, was detained and intercepted in their passage, through the foulest channels, to the treasury of Constantinople. The revenue was dissipated by Theodosius, and his favourites, in wasteful and profuse luxury. The immediate supplies had been exhausted by the unforeseen necessity of military preparations. A personal contribution, rigorously, but capriciously, imposed on the members of the senatorian order, was the only expedient that could disarm, without loss of time, the impatient avarice of Attila: and the poverty of the nobles compelled them to adopt the scandalous resource of exposing to public auction the jewels of their wives, and the hereditary ornaments of their palaces*. III. The king of the Huns appears to have established, as a

* According to the description, or rather invective of Chrysostom, an auction of Byzantine luxury must have been very productive. Every wealthy house possessed a semicircular table of massy silver, such as two men could scarcely lift, a vase of solid gold of the weight of forty pounds, cups, dishes of the same metal, &c.

principle of national jurisprudence, that he could never lose the property, which he had once acquired, in the persons who had yielded either a voluntary, or reluctant, submission to his authority. From this principle he concluded, and the conclusions of Attila were irrevocable laws, that the Huns, who had been taken prisoners in war, should be released without delay, and without ransom; that every Roman captive, who had presumed to escape, should purchase his right to freedom at the price of twelve pieces of gold; and that all the Barbarians, who had deserted the standard of Attila, should be restored, without any promise, or stipulation, of pardon. In the execution of this cruel and ignominious treaty, the Imperial officers were forced to massacre several loyal and noble deserters, who refused to devote themselves to certain death; and the Romans forfeited all reasonable claims to the friendship of any Scythian people, by this public confession, that they were destitute either of faith, or power, to protect the suppliants, who had embraced the throne of Theodosius.

The firmness of a single town, so obscure, that, except on this occasion, it has never been mentioned by any historian or geographer, exposed the disgrace of the emperor and empire. Azimus, or Azimuntium, a small city of Thrace on the Illyrian borders, had been distinguished by the martial spirit of its youth, the skill and reputation of the leaders whom they had chosen, and their daring exploits against the innumerable host of the Barbarians. Instead of tamely expecting their approach, the Azimuntines attacked, in frequent and successful sallies, the troops of the Huns, who gradually declined the dangerous neighbourhood; rescued from their hands the spoil and the captives, and recruited their domestic force by the voluntary association of fugitives and deserters. After the conclusion of the treaty, Attila still me-

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naced the empire with implacable war, unless the Azimuntines were persuaded, or compelled, to comply with the conditions which their sovereign had accepted. The ministers of Theodosius confessed with shame, and with truth, that they no longer possessed any authority over a society of men, who so bravely asserted their natural independence; and the king of the Huns condescended to negotiate an equal exchange with the citizens of Azimus. They demanded the restitution of some shepherds, who, with their cattle, had been accidentally surprised. A strict, though fruitless, inquiry was allowed: but the Huns were obliged to swear, that they did not detain any prisoners belonging to the city, before they could recover two surviving countrymen, whom the Azimuntines had reserved as pledges for the safety of their lost companions. Attila, on his side, was satisfied, and deceived, by their solemn asseveration, that the rest of the captives had been put to the sword; and that it was their constant practice immediately to dismiss the Romans and the deserters, who had obtained the security of the public faith. This prudent and officious dissimulation may be condemned, or excused, by the casuists: but every soldier, every statesman, must acknowledge, that, if the race of the Azimuntines had been encouraged and multiplied, the Barbarians would have ceased to trample on the majesty of the empire.

Embassies
from Attila
to Con-
stantinople.

It would have been strange, indeed, if Theodosius had purchased, by the loss of honour, a secure and solid tranquillity; or if his tameness had not invited the repetition of injuries. The Byzantine court was insulted by five or six successive embassies*; and the ministers of Attila were uniformly instructed to press

* Montesquieu (*Considerations sur la Grandeur, &c. c. xix.*) has delineated, with a bold and easy pencil, some of the most striking circumstances of the pride of Attila, and the disgrace of the Romans. He deserves the praise of having read the *Fragments of Priscus*, which have been too much disregarded.

the tardy or imperfect execution of the last treaty; to produce the names of fugitives and deserters, who were still protected by the empire; and to declare, with seeming moderation, that unless their sovereign obtained complete and immediate satisfaction, it would be impossible for him, were it even his wish, to check the resentment of his warlike tribes. Besides the motives of pride and interest, which might prompt the king of the Huns to continue this train of negotiation, he was influenced by the less honourable view of enriching his favourites at the expense of his enemies. The Imperial treasury was exhausted, to procure the friendly offices of the ambassadors, and their principal attendants, whose favourable report might conduce to the maintenance of peace. The Barbarian monarch was flattered by the liberal reception of his ministers; he computed with pleasure the value and splendour of their gifts, rigorously exacted the performance of every promise, which would contribute to their private emolument, and treated as an important business of state the marriage of his secretary Constantius. That Gallic adventurer, who was recommended by Ætius to the king of the Huns, had engaged his service to the ministers of Constantinople, for the stipulated reward of a wealthy and noble wife; and the daughter of count Saturninus was chosen to discharge the obligations of her country. The reluctance of the victim, some domestic troubles, and the unjust confiscation of her fortune, cooled the ardour of her interested lover; but he still demanded, in the name of Attila, an equivalent alliance; and, after many ambiguous delays and excuses, the Byzantine court was compelled to sacrifice to this insolent stranger the widow of Armatius, whose birth, opulence, and beauty, placed her in the most illustrious rank of the Roman matrons. For these importunate and oppressive em-

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bassies, Attila claimed a suitable return : he weighed, with suspicious pride, the character and station of the Imperial envoys ; but he condescended to promise, that he would advance as far as Sardica, to receive any ministers who had been invested with the consular dignity. The council of Theodosius eluded this proposal, by representing the desolate and ruined condition of Sardica ; and even ventured to insinuate, that every officer of the army or household was qualified to treat with the most powerful princes of Scythia. Maximin, a respectable courtier, whose abilities had been long exercised in civil and military employments, accepted with reluctance the troublesome, and, perhaps, dangerous commission, of reconciling the angry spirit of the king of the Huns. His friend, the historian Priscus*, embraced the opportunity of observing the Barbarian hero in the peaceful and domestic scenes of life : but the secret of the embassy, a fatal and guilty secret, was intrusted only to the interpreter Vigilius. The two last ambassadors of the Huns, Orestes, a noble subject of the Pannonian province, and Edecon, a valiant chieftain of the tribe of the Scyrri, returned at the same time from Constantinople to the royal camp. Their obscure names were afterwards illustrated by the extraordinary fortune and the contrast of their sons ; the two servants of Attila became the fathers of the last Roman emperor of the West, and of the first Barbarian king of Italy.

The embassy of
Maximin
to Attila,
A. D. 448.

The ambassadors, who were followed by a numerous train of men and horses, made their first halt at Sardica, at the distance of three hundred and fifty miles, or thirteen days' journey from Constantinople. As the remains of Sardica were still included within the

* Priscus was a native of Panium in Thrace, and deserved, by his eloquence, an honourable place among the sophists of the age. His Byzantine history, which related to his own times, was comprised in seven books. See Fabricius, *Bibliot. Græc.* tom. vi. p. 235, 236.

limits of the empire, it was incumbent on the Romans to exercise the duties of hospitality. They provided, with the assistance of the provincials, a sufficient number of sheep and oxen; and invited the Huns to a splendid, or, at least, a plentiful, supper. But the harmony of the entertainment was soon disturbed by mutual prejudice and indiscretion. The greatness of the emperor and the empire was warmly maintained by their ministers; the Huns, with equal ardour, asserted the superiority of their victorious monarch: the dispute was inflamed by the rash and unseasonable flattery of Vigilius, who passionately rejected the comparison of a mere mortal with the divine Theodosius; and it was with extreme difficulty that Maximin and Priscus were able to divert the conversation, or to soothe the angry minds, of the Barbarians. When they rose from table, the Imperial ambassador presented Edecon and Orestes with rich gifts of silk robes and Indian pearls, which they thankfully accepted. Yet Orestes could not forbear insinuating, that *he* had not always been treated with such respect and liberality: and the offensive distinction which was implied, between his civil office and the hereditary rank of his colleague, seems to have made Edecon a doubtful friend, and Orestes an irreconcilable enemy. After this entertainment, they travelled about one hundred miles from Sardica to Naissus. That flourishing city, which had given birth to the great Constantine, was levelled with the ground: the inhabitants were destroyed or dispersed; and the appearance of some sick persons, who were still permitted to exist among the ruins of the churches, served only to increase the horror of the prospect. The surface of the country was covered with the bones of the slain; and the ambassadors, who directed their course to the north-west, were obliged to pass the hills of modern Servia, before

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they descended into the flat and marshy grounds, which are terminated by the Danube. The Huns were masters of the great river : their navigation was performed in large canoes, hollowed out of the trunk of a single tree ; the ministers of Theodosius were safely landed on the opposite bank ; and their Barbarian associates immediately hastened to the camp of Attila, which was equally prepared for the amusements of hunting, or of war. No sooner had Maximin advanced about two miles from the Danube, than he began to experience the fastidious insolence of the conqueror. He was sternly forbid to pitch his tents in a pleasant valley, lest he should infringe the distant awe that was due to the royal mansion. The ministers of Attila pressed him to communicate the business, and the instructions, which he reserved for the ear of their sovereign. When Maximin temperately urged the contrary practice of nations, he was still more confounded to find, that the resolutions of the Sacred Consistory, those secrets (says Priscus) which should not be revealed to the gods themselves, had been treacherously disclosed to the public enemy. On his refusal to comply with such ignominious terms, the Imperial envoy was commanded instantly to depart : the order was recalled ; it was again repeated ; and the Huns renewed their ineffectual attempts to subdue the patient firmness of Maximin. At length, by the intercession of Scotta, the brother of Onegesius, whose friendship had been purchased by a liberal gift, he was admitted to the royal presence ; but, instead of obtaining a decisive answer, he was compelled to undertake a remote journey towards the North, that Attila might enjoy the proud satisfaction of receiving, in the same camp, the ambassadors of the Eastern and Western empires. His journey was regulated by the guides, who obliged him to halt, to hasten his march, or to deviate from the common road, as it best suited

the convenience of the king. The Romans who traversed the plains of Hungary, suppose that they passed *several* navigable rivers, either in canoes or portable boats; but there is reason to suspect, that the winding stream of the Teyss, or Tibiscus, might present itself in different places, under different names. From the contiguous villages they received a plentiful and regular supply of provisions; mead instead of wine, millet in the place of bread, and a certain liquor named *camus*, which, according to the report of Priscus, was distilled from barley. Such fare might appear coarse and indelicate to men who had tasted the luxury of Constantinople: but, in their accidental distress, they were relieved by the gentleness and hospitality of the same Barbarians, so terrible and so merciless in war. The ambassadors had encamped on the edge of a large morass. A violent tempest of wind and rain, of thunder and lightning, overturned their tents, immersed their baggage and furniture in the water, and scattered their retinue, who wandered in the darkness of the night, uncertain of their road, and apprehensive of some unknown danger, till they awakened by their cries the inhabitants of a neighbouring village, the property of the widow of Bleda. A bright illumination, and, in a few moments, a comfortable fire of reeds, was kindled by their officious benevolence: the wants, and even the desires, of the Romans were liberally satisfied; and they seem to have been embarrassed by the singular politeness of Bleda's widow. The sunshine of the succeeding day was dedicated to repose; to collect and dry the baggage, and to the refreshment of the men and horses: but, in the evening, before they pursued their journey, the ambassadors expressed their gratitude to the bounteous lady of the village, by a very acceptable present of silver cups, red fleeces, dried fruits, and Indian pepper.

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The royal
village and
palace.

Soon after this adventure, they rejoined the march of Attila, from whom they had been separated about six days ; and slowly proceeded to the capital of an empire, which did not contain, in the space of several thousand miles, a single city.

As far as we may ascertain the vague and obscure geography of Priscus, this capital appears to have been seated between the Danube, the Teyss, and the Carpathian hills, in the plains of Upper Hungary, and most probably in the neighbourhood of Jazberin, Agria, or Tokay. In its origin it could be no more than an accidental camp, which, by the long and frequent residence of Attila, had insensibly swelled into a huge village, for the reception of his court, of the troops who followed his person, and of the various multitude of idle or industrious slaves and retainers*. The baths, constructed by Onegesius, were the only edifice of stone ; the materials had been transported from Pannonia ; and since the adjacent country was destitute even of large timber, it may be presumed, that the meaner habitations of the royal village consisted of straw, of mud, or of canvas. The wooden houses of the more illustrious Huns were built and adorned with rude magnificence, according to the rank, the fortune, or the taste of the proprietors. They seem to have been distributed with some degree of order and symmetry ; and each spot became more honourable, as it approached the person of the sovereign. The palace of Attila, which surpassed all other houses in his dominions, was built entirely of wood, and covered an ample space of ground. The outward enclosure was a lofty wall,

* The royal village of Attila may be compared to the city of Karacorum, the residence of the successors of Zingis ; which, though it appears to have been a more stable habitation, did not equal the size or splendour of the town and abbey of St. Denys, in the 13th century (see Rubruquis, in the *Histoire Generale des Voyages*, tom. vii. p. 286). The camp of Aurengzebe, as it is so agreeably described by Bernier (tom. ii. p. 217—235), blended the manners of Scythia with the magnificence and luxury of Hindostan.

or palisade, of smooth square timber, intersected with high towers, but intended rather for ornament than defence. This wall, which seems to have encircled the declivity of a hill, comprehended a great variety of wooden edifices, adapted to the uses of royalty. A separate house was assigned to each of the numerous wives of Attila; and, instead of the rigid and illiberal confinement imposed by Asiatic jealousy, they politely admitted the Roman ambassadors to their presence, their table, and even to the freedom of an innocent embrace. When Maximin offered his presents to Cerca, the principal queen, he admired the singular architecture of her mansion, the height of the round columns, the size and beauty of the wood, which was curiously shaped, or turned, or polished, or carved; and his attentive eye was able to discover some taste in the ornaments, and some regularity in the proportions. After passing through the guards who watched before the gate, the ambassadors were introduced into the private apartment of Cerca. The wife of Attila received their visit sitting, or rather lying, on a soft couch; the floor was covered with a carpet; the domestics formed a circle round the queen; and her damsels, seated on the ground, were employed in working the variegated embroidery which adorned the dress of the Barbaric warriors. The Huns were ambitious of displaying those riches which were the fruit and evidence of their victories: the trappings of their horses, their swords, and even their shoes, were studded with gold and precious stones; and their tables were profusely spread with plates, and goblets, and vases of gold and silver, which had been fashioned by the labour of Grecian artists. The monarch alone assumed the superior pride of still adhering to the simplicity of his Scythian ancestors. The dress of Attila, his arms, and the furniture of his horse, were

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The beha-
viour of
Attila to
the Roman
ambassa-
dors.

plain, without ornament, and of a single colour. The royal table was served in wooden cups and platters; flesh was his only food; and the conqueror of the North never tasted the luxury of bread.

When Attila first gave audience to the Roman ambassadors on the banks of the Danube, his tent was encompassed with a formidable guard. The monarch himself was seated in a wooden chair. His stern countenance, angry gestures, and impatient tone, astonished the firmness of Maximin; but Vigilius had more reason to tremble, since he distinctly understood the menace, that if Attila did not respect the law of nations, he would nail the deceitful interpreter to a cross, and leave his body to the vultures. The Barbarian condescended, by producing an accurate list, to expose the bold falsehood of Vigilius, who had affirmed that no more than seventeen deserters could be found. But he arrogantly declared, that he apprehended only the disgrace of contending with his fugitive slaves; since he despised their impotent efforts to defend the provinces which Theodosius had intrusted to their arms: "For what fortress," added Attila, "what city, in the wide extent of the Roman empire, can hope to exist, secure and impregnable, if it is our pleasure that it should be erased from the earth?" He dismissed, however, the interpreter, who returned to Constantinople with his peremptory demand of more complete restitution, and a more splendid embassy. His anger gradually subsided, and his domestic satisfaction, in a marriage which he celebrated on the road with the daughter of Eslam, might perhaps contribute to mollify the native fierceness of his temper. The entrance of Attila into the royal village was marked by a very singular ceremony. A numerous troop of women came out to meet their hero, and their king. They marched before him, distributed

into long and regular files : the intervals between the files were filled by white veils of thin linen, which the women on either side bore aloft in their hands, and which formed a canopy for a chorus of young virgins, who chanted hymns and songs in the Scythian language. The wife of his favourite Onegesius, with a train of female attendants, saluted Attila at the door of her own house, on his way to the palace ; and offered, according to the custom of the country, her respectful homage, by entreating him to taste the wine and meat, which she had prepared for his reception. As soon as the monarch had graciously accepted her hospitable gift, his domestics lifted a small silver table to a convenient height, as he sat on horseback ; and Attila, when he had touched the goblet with his lips, again saluted the wife of Onegesius, and continued his march. During his residence at the seat of empire, his hours were not wasted in the recluse idleness of a seraglio ; and the king of the Huns could maintain his superior dignity, without concealing his person from the public view. He frequently assembled his council, and gave audience to the ambassadors of the nations ; and his people might appeal to the supreme tribunal, which he held at stated times, and, according to the Eastern custom, before the principal gate of his wooden palace. The Romans, both of the East and of the West, were twice invited to the banquets, where Attila feasted with the princes and nobles of Scythia. Maximin and his colleagues were stopped on the threshold, till they had made a devout libation to the health and prosperity of the king of the Huns ; and were conducted, after this ceremony, to their respective seats in a spacious hall. The royal table and couch, covered with carpets and fine linen, was raised by several steps in the midst of the hall ; and a son, an uncle, or perhaps a favourite king, were

The royal
feast.

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admitted to share the simple and homely repast of Attila. Two lines of small tables, each of which contained three or four guests, were ranged in order on either hand; the right was esteemed the most honourable, but the Romans ingenuously confess, that they were placed on the left; and that Beric, an unknown chieftain, most probably of the Gothic race, preceded the representatives of Theodosius and Valentinian. The Barbarian monarch received from his cup-bearer a goblet filled with wine, and courteously drank to the health of the most distinguished guest; who rose from his seat, and expressed, in the same manner, his loyal and respectful vows. This ceremony was successively performed for all, or at least for the illustrious persons of the assembly; and a considerable time must have been consumed, since it was thrice repeated, as each course of service was placed on the table. But the wine still remained after the meat had been removed; and the Huns continued to indulge their intemperance long after the sober and decent ambassadors of the two empires had withdrawn themselves from the nocturnal banquet. Yet before they retired, they enjoyed a singular opportunity of observing the manners of the nation in their convivial amusements. Two Scythians stood before the couch of Attila, and recited the verses which they had composed, to celebrate his valour and his victories. A profound silence prevailed in the hall; and the attention of the guests was captivated by the vocal harmony, which revived and perpetuated the memory of their own exploits: a martial ardour flashed from the eyes of the warriors, who were impatient for battle; and the tears of the old men expressed their generous despair, that they could no longer partake the danger and glory of the field. This entertainment, which might be considered as a school of military virtue, was succeeded

by a farce, that debased the dignity of human nature. A Moorish and a Scythian buffoon successively excited the mirth of the rude spectators, by their deformed figure, ridiculous dress, antic gestures, absurd speeches, and the strange unintelligible confusion of the Latin, the Gothic, and the Hunnic languages; and the hall resounded with loud and licentious peals of laughter. In the midst of this intemperate riot, Attila alone, without a change of countenance, maintained his stedfast and inflexible gravity; which was never relaxed, except on the entrance of Irnac, the youngest of his sons: he embraced the boy with a smile of paternal tenderness, gently pinched him by the cheek, and betrayed a partial affection, which was justified by the assurance of his prophets, that Irnac would be the future support of his family and empire. Two days afterwards, the ambassadors received a second invitation; and they had reason to praise the politeness, as well as the hospitality, of Attila. The king of the Huns held a long and familiar conversation with Maximin; but his civility was interrupted by rude expressions, and haughty reproaches; and he was provoked, by a motive of interest, to support, with unbecoming zeal, the private claims of his secretary Constantius. "The emperor," said Attila, "has long promised him a rich wife: Constantius must not be disappointed; nor should a Roman emperor deserve the name of liar." On the third day, the ambassadors were dismissed; the freedom of several captives was granted, for a moderate ransom, to their pressing entreaties; and, besides the royal presents, they were permitted to accept from each of the Scythian nobles the honourable and useful gift of a horse. Maximin returned, by the same road, to Constantinople; and though he was involved in an accidental dispute with Beric, the new ambassador of Attila, he flattered himself that he had

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of the
Romans
against the
life of
Attila.

contributed, by the laborious journey, to confirm the peace and alliance of the two nations.

But the Roman ambassador was ignorant of the treacherous design, which had been concealed under the mask of the public faith. The surprise and satisfaction of Edecon, when he contemplated the splendour of Constantinople, had encouraged the interpreter Vigilius to procure for him a secret interview with the eunuch Chrysaphius, who governed the emperor and the empire. After some previous conversation, and a mutual oath of secrecy, the eunuch, who had not, from his own feelings or experience, imbibed any exalted notions of ministerial virtue, ventured to propose the death of Attila, as an important service, by which Edecon might deserve a liberal share of the wealth and luxury which he admired. The ambassador of the Huns listened to the tempting offer; and professed, with apparent zeal, his ability, as well as readiness, to execute the bloody deed: the design was communicated to the master of the offices, and Theodosius consented to the assassination of his invincible enemy. But this perfidious conspiracy was defeated by the dissimulation, or the repentance, of Edecon; and, though he might exaggerate his inward abhorrence for the treason, which he seemed to approve, he dexterously assumed the merit of an early and voluntary confession. If we *now* review the embassy of Maximin, and the behaviour of Attila, we must applaud the Barbarian, who respected the laws of hospitality, and generously entertained and dismissed the minister of a prince who had conspired against his life. But the rashness of Vigilius will appear still more extraordinary, since he returned, conscious of his guilt and danger, to the royal camp; accompanied by his son, and carrying with him a weighty purse of gold, which the favourite eunuch had furnished, to satisfy the

demands of Edecon, and to corrupt the fidelity of the guards. The interpreter was instantly seized, and dragged before the tribunal of Attila, where he asserted his innocence with specious firmness, till the threat of inflicting instant death on his son extorted from him a sincere discovery of the criminal transaction. Under the name of ransom or confiscation, the rapacious king of the Huns accepted two hundred pounds of gold for the life of a traitor, whom he disdained to punish. He pointed his just indignation against a nobler object. His ambassadors Eslaw and Orestes were immediately despatched to Constantinople, with a peremptory instruction, which it was much safer for them to execute than to disobey. They boldly entered the Imperial presence, with the fatal purse hanging down from the neck of Orestes ; who interrogated the eunuch Chrysaphius, as he stood beside the throne, whether he recognised the evidence of his guilt. But the office of reproof was reserved for the superior dignity of his colleague Eslaw, who gravely addressed the Emperor of the East in the following words : “ Theodosius is the son of an illustrious and respectable parent : Attila likewise “ is descended from a noble race ; and *he* has supported, by his actions, the dignity which he inherited from his father Mundzuk. But Theodosius has forfeited his paternal honours, and, by consenting to pay tribute, has degraded himself to the condition of a slave. It is therefore just, that he should reverence the man whom fortune and merit have placed above him ; instead of attempting, like a wicked slave, clandestinely to conspire against his master.” The son of Arcadius, who was accustomed only to the voice of flattery, heard with astonishment the severe language of truth ; he blushed and trembled ; nor did he presume directly

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He reprimands and forgives the emperor.

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to refuse the head of Chrysaphius, which Eslaw and Orestes were instructed to demand. A solemn embassy, armed with full powers and magnificent gifts, was hastily sent to deprecate the wrath of Attila; and his pride was gratified by the choice of Nomius and Anatolius, two ministers of consular or patrician rank, of whom the one was great treasurer, and the other was master-general of the armies of the East. He condescended to meet these ambassadors on the banks of the river Drengo; and though he at first affected a stern and haughty demeanour, his anger was insensibly mollified by their eloquence and liberality. He condescended to pardon the emperor, the eunuch, and the interpreter; bound himself by an oath to observe the conditions of peace; released a great number of captives; abandoned the fugitives and deserters to their fate; and resigned a large territory to the south of the Danube, which he had already exhausted of its wealth and inhabitants. But this treaty was purchased at an expense which might have supported a vigorous and successful war; and the subjects of Theodosius were compelled to redeem the safety of a worthless favourite by oppressive taxes, which they would more cheerfully have paid for his destruction.

Theodosius
the Younger
dies,
A. D. 450,
July 28;

The emperor Theodosius did not long survive the most humiliating circumstance of an inglorious life. As he was riding, or hunting, in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, he was thrown from his horse into the river Lycus: the spine of the back was injured by the fall; and he expired some days afterwards, in the fiftieth year of his age, and the forty-third of his reign. His sister Pulcheria, whose authority had been controlled both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs by the pernicious influence of the eunuchs, was unanimously proclaimed Empress of the East; and the

Romans, for the first time, submitted to a female reign. No sooner had Pulcheria ascended the throne, than she indulged her own and the public resentment, by an act of popular justice. Without any legal trial, the eunuch Chrysaphius was executed before the gates of the city; and the immense riches which had been accumulated by the rapacious favourite served only to hasten and to justify his punishment. Amidst the general acclamations of the clergy and people, the empress did not forget the prejudice and disadvantage to which her sex was exposed; and she wisely resolved to prevent their murmurs by the choice of a colleague, who would always respect the superior rank and virgin chastity of his wife. She gave her hand to Marcian, a senator, about sixty years of age, and the nominal husband of Pulcheria was solemnly invested with the Imperial purple. The zeal which he displayed for the orthodox creed, as it was established by the council of Chalcedon, would alone have inspired the grateful eloquence of the Catholics. But the behaviour of Marcian in a private life, and afterwards on the throne, may support a more rational belief, that he was qualified to restore and invigorate an empire, which had been almost dissolved by the successive weakness of two hereditary monarchs. He was born in Thrace, and educated to the profession of arms; but Marcian's youth had been severely exercised by poverty and misfortune, since his only resource, when he first arrived at Constantinople, consisted in two hundred pieces of gold, which he had borrowed of a friend. He passed nineteen years in the domestic and military service of Aspar, and his son Ardaburius; followed those powerful generals to the Persian and African wars; and obtained, by their influence, the honourable rank of tribune and senator. His mild disposition, and useful talents, without alarming the

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XXVIII.and is suc-
ceeded by
Marcian,
Aug. 25.

CHAP. XXVIII. jealousy, recommended Marcian to the esteem and favour of his patrons : he had seen, perhaps he had felt, the abuses of a venal and oppressive administration ; and his own example gave weight and energy to the laws, which he promulgated for the reformation of manners.

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Invasion of Gaul by Attila.—He is repulsed by Ætius and the Visigoths.—Attila invades and evacuates Italy.—The Deaths of Attila, Ætius, and Valentinian the Third.

It was the opinion of Marcian, that war should be avoided, as long as it is possible to preserve a secure and honourable peace; but it was likewise his opinion, that peace cannot be honourable or secure, if the sovereign betrays a pusillanimous aversion to war. This temperate courage dictated his reply to the demands of Attila, who insolently pressed the payment of the annual tribute. The emperor signified to the Barbarians, that they must no longer insult the majesty of Rome by the mention of a tribute; that he was disposed to reward, with becoming liberality, the faithful friendship of his allies; but that, if they presumed to violate the public peace, they should feel that he possessed troops, and arms, and resolution, to repel their attacks. The same language, even in the camp of the Huns, was used by his ambassador Apollonius, whose bold refusal to deliver the presents, till he had been admitted to a personal interview, displayed a sense of dignity, and a contempt of danger, which Attila was not prepared to expect from the degenerate Romans*. He threatened to chastise the rash successor of Theodosius; but he hesitated whether he should first direct his invincible arms against the Eastern or the Western empire. While mankind awaited his decision with awful suspense, he sent an equal defiance to the courts of Ravenna and Constantinople; and his ministers saluted the two emperors with the same haughty declaration.

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Attila threatens both empires, and prepares to invade Gaul, A. D. 450.

* See Priscus, p. 30. 72.

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“ Attila, *my* lord, and *thy* lord, commands thee to “ provide a palace for his immediate reception.” But as the Barbarian despised, or affected to despise, the Romans of the East, whom he had so often vanquished, he soon declared his resolution of suspending the easy conquest, till he had achieved a more glorious and important enterprise. In the memorable invasions of Gaul and Italy, the Huns were naturally attracted by the wealth and fertility of those provinces; but the particular motives and provocations of Attila can only be explained by the state of the Western empire under the reign of Valentinian, or, to speak more correctly, under the administration of Ætius.

Character
and admin-
istration
of Ætius.
A. D. 433
—454.

After the death of his rival Boniface, Ætius had prudently retired to the tents of the Huns; and he was indebted to their alliance for his safety and his restoration. Instead of the suppliant language of a guilty exile, he solicited his pardon at the head of sixty thousand Barbarians; and the empress Placidia confessed, by a feeble resistance, that the condescension, which might have been ascribed to clemency, was the effect of weakness or fear. She delivered herself, her son Valentinian, and the Western empire, into the hands of an insolent subject; nor could Placidia protect the son-in-law of Boniface, the virtuous and faithful Sebastian, from the implacable persecution, which urged him from one kingdom to another, till he miserably perished in the service of the Vandals. The fortunate Ætius, who was immediately promoted to the rank of patrician, and thrice invested with the honours of the consulship, assumed, with the title of master of the cavalry and infantry, the whole military power of the state; and he is sometimes styled, by contemporary writers, the Duke, or General, of the Romans of the West. His prudence, rather than his virtue, engaged him to

leave the grandson of Theodosius in the possession of the purple ; and Valentinian was permitted to enjoy the peace and luxury of Italy, while the patrician appeared in the glorious light of a hero and a patriot, who supported near twenty years the ruins of the Western empire. The Gothic historian ingenuously confesses, that Ætius was born for the salvation of the Roman republic ; and the following portrait, though it is drawn in the fairest colours, must be allowed to contain a much larger proportion of truth than of flattery. “ His mother was a wealthy and noble Italian, and his father Gaudentius, who held a distinguished rank in the province of Scythia, gradually rose from the station of a military *domestic*, to the dignity of master of the cavalry. Their son, who was enrolled almost in his infancy in the guards, was given as a hostage, first to Alaric, and afterwards to the Huns ; and he successively obtained the civil and military honours of the palace, for which he was equally qualified by superior merit. The graceful figure of Ætius was not above the middle stature ; but his manly limbs were admirably formed for strength, beauty, and agility ; and he excelled in the martial exercises of managing a horse, drawing the bow, and darting the javelin. He could patiently endure the want of food or of sleep ; and his mind and body were alike capable of the most laborious efforts. He possessed the genuine courage, that can despise not only dangers but injuries ; and it was impossible either to corrupt, or deceive, or intimidate the firm integrity of his soul.” The Barbarians, who had seated themselves in the Western provinces, were insensibly taught to respect the faith and valour of the patrician Ætius. He soothed their passions, consulted their prejudices, balanced their interests, and checked their ambition. A seasonable treaty, which

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he concluded with Genseric, protected Italy from the depredations of the Vandals ; the independent Britons implored and acknowledged his salutary aid ; the Imperial authority was restored and maintained in Gaul and Spain ; and he compelled the Franks and the Suevi, whom he had vanquished in the field, to become the useful confederates of the republic.

His connexion with the Huns and Alani.

From a principle of interest, as well as gratitude, Ætius assiduously cultivated the alliance of the Huns. While he resided in their tents as a hostage, or an exile, he had familiarly conversed with Attila himself, the nephew of his benefactor ; and the two famous antagonists appear to have been connected by a personal and military friendship, which they afterwards confirmed by mutual gifts, frequent embassies, and the education of Carpilio, the son of Ætius, in the camp of Attila. By the specious professions of gratitude and voluntary attachment, the patrician might disguise his apprehensions of the Scythian conqueror, who pressed the two empires with his innumerable armies. His demands were obeyed or eluded. When he claimed the spoils of a vanquished city, some vases of gold, which had been fraudulently embezzled, the civil and military governors of Noricum were immediately despatched to satisfy his complaints ; and it is evident, from their conversation with Maximin and Priscus, in the royal village, that the valour and prudence of Ætius had not saved the Western Romans from the common ignominy of tribute. Yet his dexterous policy prolonged the advantages of a salutary peace ; and a numerous army of Huns and Alani, whom he had attached to his person, was employed in the defence of Gaul. Two colonies of these Barbarians were judiciously fixed in the territories of Valens and Orleans : and their active cavalry secured the important passages of the Rhône and of the Loire. These savage allies were

not indeed less formidable to the subjects than to the enemies of Rome. Their original settlement was enforced with the licentious violence of conquest; and the province through which they marched was exposed to all the calamities of a hostile invasion. Strangers to the emperor or the republic, the Alani of Gaul were devoted to the ambition of Ætius; and though he might suspect, that, in a contest with Attila himself, they would revolt to the standard of their national king, the patrician laboured to restrain, rather than to excite, their zeal and resentment against the Goths, the Burgundians, and the Franks.

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The kingdom established by the Visigoths in the southern provinces of Gaul had gradually acquired strength and maturity; and the conduct of those ambitious Barbarians, either in peace or war, engaged the perpetual vigilance of Ætius. After the death of Wallia, the Gothic sceptre devolved to Theodoric, the son of the great Alaric; and his prosperous reign, of more than thirty years, over a turbulent people, may be allowed to prove, that his prudence was supported by uncommon vigour, both of mind and body. Impatient of his narrow limits, Theodoric aspired to the possession of Arles, the wealthy seat of government and commerce; but the city was saved by the timely approach of Ætius; and the Gothic king, who had raised the siege with some loss and disgrace, was persuaded, for an adequate subsidy, to divert the martial valour of his subjects in a Spanish war. Yet Theodoric still watched, and eagerly seized, the favourable moment of renewing his hostile attempts. The Goths besieged Narbonne, while the Belgic provinces were invaded by the Burgundians; and the public safety was threatened on every side by the apparent union of the enemies of Rome. On every side, the activity of Ætius, and his Scythian cavalry, opposed a firm and successful resistance. Twenty

The Visigoths in Gaul under the reign of Theodoric, A. D. 419—451.

A. D. 435—439.

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thousand Burgundians were slain in battle ; and the remains of the nation humbly accepted a dependent seat in the mountains of Savoy. The walls of Narbonne had been shaken by the battering engines, and the inhabitants had endured the last extremities of famine, when count Litorius, approaching in silence, and directing each horseman to carry behind him two sacks of flour, cut his way through the intrenchments of the besiegers. The siege was immediately raised ; and the more decisive victory, which is ascribed to the personal conduct of Ætius himself, was marked with the blood of eight thousand Goths. But in the absence of the patrician, who was hastily summoned to Italy by some public or private interest, count Litorius succeeded to the command ; and his presumption soon discovered, that far different talents are required to lead a wing of cavalry, or to direct the operations of an important war. At the head of an army of Huns, he rashly advanced to the gates of Thoulouse, full of careless contempt for an enemy, whom his misfortunes had rendered prudent, and his situation made desperate. The predictions of the augurs had inspired Litorius with the profane confidence, that he should enter the Gothic capital in triumph ; and the trust which he reposed in his Pagan allies encouraged him to reject the fair conditions of peace, which were repeatedly proposed by the bishops in the name of Theodoric. The king of the Goths exhibited in his distress the edifying contrast of Christian piety and moderation ; nor did he lay aside his sackcloth and ashes till he was prepared to arm for the combat. His soldiers, animated with martial and religious enthusiasm, assaulted the camp of Litorius. The conflict was obstinate ; the slaughter was mutual. The Roman general, after a total defeat, which could be imputed only to his unskilful rashness, was actually led through the streets of

Thoulouse, not in his own, but in a hostile triumph ; and the misery which he experienced, in a long and ignominious captivity, excited the compassion of the Barbarians themselves. Such a loss, in a country whose spirit and finances were long since exhausted, could not easily be repaired ; and the Goths, assuming, in their turn, the sentiments of ambition and revenge, would have planted their victorious standards on the banks of the Rhône, if the presence of Ætius had not restored strength and discipline to the Romans. The two armies expected the signal of a decisive action ; but the generals, who were conscious of each other's force, and doubtful of their own superiority, prudently sheathed their swords in the field of battle ; and their reconciliation was permanent and sincere. Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, appears to have deserved the love of his subjects, the confidence of his allies, and the esteem of mankind. His throne was surrounded by six valiant sons, who were educated with equal care in the exercises of the Barbarian camp, and in those of the Gallic schools : from the study of the Roman jurisprudence, they acquired the theory, at least, of law and justice ; and the harmonious sense of Virgil contributed to soften the asperity of their native manners. The two daughters of the Gothic king were given in marriage to the eldest sons of the kings of the Suevi and of the Vandals, who reigned in Spain and Africa ; but these illustrious alliances were pregnant with guilt and discord. The queen of the Suevi bewailed the death of a husband, inhumanly massacred by her brother. The princess of the Vandals was the victim of a jealous tyrant, whom she called her father. The cruel Genseric suspected that his son's wife had conspired to poison him ; the supposed crime was punished by the amputation of her nose and ears ; and the unhappy daughter of Theodoric was igno-

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miniously returned to the court of Thoulouse in that deformed and mutilated condition. This horrid act, which must seem incredible to a civilized age, drew tears from every spectator ; but Theodoric was urged, by the feelings of a parent and a king, to revenge such irreparable injuries. The Imperial ministers, who always cherished the discord of the Barbarians, would have supplied the Goths with arms, and ships, and treasures, for the African war ; and the cruelty of Genseric might have been fatal to himself, if the artful Vandal had not armed, in his cause, the formidable power of the Huns. His rich gifts and pressing solicitations inflamed the ambition of Attila ; and the designs of Ætius and Theodoric were prevented by the invasion of Gaul.

The Franks
in Gaul,
under the
Merovin-
gian kings.

The Franks, whose monarchy was still confined to the neighbourhood of the Lower Rhine, had wisely established the right of hereditary succession in the noble family of the Merovingians. These princes were elevated on a buckler, the symbol of military command ; and the royal fashion of long hair was the ensign of their birth and dignity. Their flaxen locks, which they combed and dressed with singular care, hung down in flowing ringlets on their back and shoulders ; while the rest of their nation were obliged, either by law or custom, to shave the hinder part of their head ; to comb their hair over the forehead, and to content themselves with the ornament of two small whiskers. The lofty stature of the Franks, and their blue eyes, denoted a Germanic origin ; their close apparel accurately expressed the figure of their limbs ; a weighty sword was suspended from a broad belt ; their bodies were protected by a large shield : and these warlike Barbarians were trained, from their earliest youth, to run, to leap, to swim ; to dart the javelin, or battle-axe, with unerring aim ; to advance, without hesitation, against a

superior enemy ; and to maintain, either in life or death, the invincible reputation of their ancestors. CHAP.
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Clodion, the first of their long-haired kings, whose name and actions are mentioned in authentic history, held his residence at Dispargum, a village, or fortress, whose place may be assigned between Louvain and Brussels. From the report of his spies, the king of the Franks was informed, that the defenceless state of the second Belgic must yield, on the slightest attack, to the valour of his subjects. He boldly penetrated through the thickets and morasses of the Carbonarian forest ; occupied Tournay and Cambray, the only cities which existed in the fifth century ; and extended his conquests as far as the river Somme, over a desolate country, whose cultivation and populousness are the effects of more recent industry. While Clodion lay encamped in the plains of Artois, and celebrated, with vain and ostentatious security, the marriage, perhaps, of his son, the nuptial feast was interrupted by the unexpected and unwelcome presence of Ætius, who had passed the Somme at the head of his light cavalry. The tables which had been spread under the shelter of a hill, along the banks of a pleasant stream, were rudely overturned ; the Franks were oppressed before they could recover their arms, or their ranks ; and their unavailing valour was fatal only to themselves. The loaded waggons, which had followed their march, afforded a rich booty ; and the virgin bride, with her female attendants, submitted to the new lovers, who were imposed on them by the chance of war. This advantage, which had been obtained by the skill and activity of Ætius, might reflect some disgrace on the military prudence of Clodion ; but the king of the Franks soon regained his strength and reputation, and still maintained the possession of his Gallic kingdom from the Rhine to the Somme. Under his reign, and most probably

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from the enterprising spirit of his subjects, the three capitals, Mentz, Treves, and Cologne, experienced the effects of hostile cruelty and avarice. The distress of Cologne was prolonged by the perpetual dominion of the same Barbarians, who evacuated the ruins of Treves; and Treves, which, in the space of forty years, had been four times besieged and pillaged, was disposed to lose the memory of her afflictions in the vain amusements of the Circus. The death of Clodion, after a reign of twenty years, exposed his kingdom to the discord and ambition of his two sons. Meroveus, the younger, was persuaded to implore the protection of Rome; he was received at the Imperial court, as the ally of Valentinian, and the adopted son of the patrician Ætius; and dismissed to his native country, with splendid gifts, and the strongest assurances of friendship and support. During his absence, his elder brother had solicited, with equal ardour, the formidable aid of Attila; and the king of the Huns embraced an alliance, which facilitated the passage of the Rhine, and justified, by a specious and honourable pretence, the invasion of Gaul.

When Attila declared his resolution of supporting the cause of his allies, the Vandals and the Franks, at the same time, and almost in the spirit of romantic chivalry, the savage monarch professed himself the lover and the champion of the princess Honoria. The sister of Valentinian was educated in the palace of Ravenna; and as her marriage might be productive of some danger to the state, she was raised, by the title of *Augusta*, above the hopes of the most presumptuous subject.

Attila in-
vades Gaul
and besieges
Orleans,
A. D. 451.

A native of Gaul, and a contemporary, the learned and eloquent Sidonius, who was afterwards bishop of Clermont, had made a promise to one of his friends, that he would compose a regular history of the war

of Attila. If the modesty of Sidonius had not discouraged him from the prosecution of this interesting work, the historian would have related, with the simplicity of truth, those memorable events, to which the poet, in vague and doubtful metaphors, has concisely alluded. The kings and nations of Germany and Scythia, from the Volga perhaps to the Danube, obeyed the warlike summons of Attila. From the royal village, in the plains of Hungary, his standard moved towards the West; and, after a march of seven or eight hundred miles, he reached the conflux of the Rhine and the Necker; where he was joined by the Franks, who adhered to his ally, the elder of the sons of Clodion. A troop of light Barbarians, who roamed in quest of plunder, might choose the winter for the convenience of passing the river on the ice; but the innumerable cavalry of the Huns required such plenty of forage and provisions, as could be procured only in a milder season; the Hercynian forest supplied materials for a bridge of boats; and the hostile myriads were poured, with resistless violence, into the Belgic provinces*. The consternation of Gaul was universal. Troyes was saved, and the march of Attila was diverted from the neighbourhood of Paris. But as the greatest part of the Gallic cities were destitute of soldiers, they were besieged and stormed by the Huns: who practised, in the example of Metz, their customary maxims of war. They involved, in a promiscuous massacre, the priests who served at the altar, and the infants, who, in the hour of danger, had been providently baptized by the bishop; the flourishing city was

* The most authentic and circumstantial account of this war is contained in Jornandes (*de Reb. Geticis*, c. 36—41. p. 662—672), who has sometimes abridged, and sometimes transcribed, the larger history of Cassiodorus. Jornandes, a quotation which it would be superfluous to repeat, may be corrected and illustrated by Gregory of Tours, l. 2. c. 5, 6, 7, and the Chronicles of Idatius, Isidore, and the two Prosperes.

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delivered to the flames, and a solitary chapel of St. Stephen marked the place where it formerly stood. From the Rhine and the Moselle, Attila advanced into the heart of Gaul; crossed the Seine at Auxerre; and, after a long and laborious march, fixed his camp under the walls of Orleans. He was desirous of securing his conquests by the possession of an advantageous post, which commanded the passage of the Loire; and he depended on the secret invitation of Sangiban, king of the Alani, who had promised to betray the city, and to revolt from the service of the empire. But this treacherous conspiracy was detected and disappointed: Orleans had been strengthened with recent fortifications; and the assaults of the Huns were vigorously repelled by the faithful valour of the soldiers, or citizens, who defended the place. The pastoral diligence of Anianus, a bishop of primitive sanctity and consummate prudence, exhausted every art of religious policy to support their courage, till the arrival of the expected succours. After an obstinate siege, the walls were shaken by the battering rams; the Huns had already occupied the suburbs; and the people, who were incapable of bearing arms, lay prostrate in prayer. Anianus, who anxiously counted the days and hours, despatched a trusty messenger to observe, from the rampart, the face of the distant country. He returned twice, without any intelligence, that could inspire hope or comfort; but, in his third report, he mentioned a small cloud, which he had faintly descried at the extremity of the horizon. "It is the aid of God!" exclaimed the bishop, in a tone of pious confidence; and the whole multitude repeated after him, "It is the aid of God." The remote object, on which every eye was fixed, became each moment larger, and more distinct; the Roman and Gothic banners were gradually perceived;

and a favourable wind blowing aside the dust, discovered, in deep array, the impatient squadrons of Ætius and Theodoric, who pressed forwards to the relief of Orleans. CHAP.
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The facility with which Attila had penetrated into the heart of Gaul may be ascribed to his insidious policy, as well as to the terror of his arms. His public declarations were skilfully mitigated by his private assurances; he alternately soothed and threatened the Romans and the Goths; and the courts of Ravenna and Thoulouse, mutually suspicious of each other's intentions, beheld, with supine indifference, the approach of their common enemy. Ætius was the sole guardian of the public safety; but his wisest measures were embarrassed by a faction, which, since the death of Placidia, infested the Imperial palace: the youth of Italy trembled at the sound of the trumpet; and the Barbarians, who, from fear or affection, were inclined to the cause of Attila, awaited, with doubtful and venal faith, the event of the war. The patrician passed the Alps at the head of some troops, whose strength and numbers scarcely deserved the name of an army. But on his arrival at Arles, or Lyons, he was confounded by the intelligence, that the Visigoths, refusing to embrace the defence of Gaul, had determined to expect, within their own territories, the formidable invader, whom they professed to despise. The senator Avitus, who, after the honourable exercise of the Prætorian præfecture, had retired to his estate in Auvergne, was persuaded to accept the important embassy, which he executed with ability and success. He represented to Theodoric, that an ambitious conqueror, who aspired to the dominion of the earth, could be resisted only by the firm and unanimous alliance of the powers whom he laboured to oppress. The lively

Alliance
of the Ro-
mans and
Visigoths.

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eloquence of Avitus inflamed the Gothic warriors, by the description of the injuries which their ancestors had suffered from the Huns; whose implacable fury still pursued them from the Danube to the foot of the Pyrenees. He strenuously urged, that it was the duty of every Christian to save, from sacrilegious violation, the churches of God, and the relics of the saints: that it was the interest of every Barbarian, who had acquired a settlement in Gaul, to defend the fields and vineyards, which were cultivated for his use, against the desolation of the Scythian shepherds. Theodoric yielded to the evidence of truth; adopted the measure at once the most prudent and the most honourable; and declared, that as the faithful ally of Ætius and the Romans, he was ready to expose his life and kingdom for the common safety of Gaul. The Visigoths, who, at that time, were in the mature vigour of their fame and power, obeyed with alacrity the signal of war; prepared their arms and horses, and assembled under the standard of their aged king, who was resolved, with his two eldest sons, Torismond and Theodoric, to command in person his numerous and valiant people. The example of the Goths determined several tribes or nations, that seemed to fluctuate between the Huns and the Romans. The indefatigable diligence of the patrician gradually collected the troops of Gaul and Germany, who had formerly acknowledged themselves the subjects, or soldiers, of the republic, but who now claimed the rewards of voluntary service, and the rank of independent allies; the Læti, the Armoricans, the Breones, the Saxons, the Burgundians, the Sarmatians, or Alani, the Ripuarians, and the Franks who followed Meroveus as their lawful prince. Such was the various army, which, under the conduct of Ætius and

Theodoric, advanced, by rapid marches, to relieve Orleans, and to give battle to the innumerable host of Attila.

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On their approach, the king of the Huns immediately raised the siege, and sounded a retreat to recal the foremost of his troops from the pillage of a city which they had already entered. The valour of Attila was always guided by his prudence; and as he foresaw the fatal consequences of a defeat in the heart of Gaul, he repassed the Seine, and expected the enemy in the plains of Châlons, whose smooth and level surface was adapted to the operations of his Scythian cavalry. But in this tumultuary retreat, the vanguard of the Romans, and their allies, continually pressed, and sometimes engaged, the troops whom Attila had posted in the rear; the hostile columns, in the darkness of the night, and the perplexity of the roads, might encounter each other without design; and the bloody conflict of the Franks and Gepidæ, in which fifteen thousand Barbarians were slain, was a prelude to a more general and decisive action. The Catalaunian fields spread themselves round Châlons, and extend, according to the vague measurement of Jornandes, to the length of one hundred and fifty, and the breadth of one hundred miles, over the whole province, which is entitled to the appellation of a *champaign* country. This spacious plain was distinguished, however, by some inequalities of ground; and the importance of a height, which commanded the camp of Attila, was understood, and disputed, by the two generals. The young and valiant Torismond first occupied the summit; the Goths rushed with irresistible weight on the Huns, who laboured to ascend from the opposite side; and the possession of this advantageous post inspired both the troops and their leaders with a fair assurance of victory. The anxiety of Attila

Attila retires to the plains of Champagne.

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prompted him to consult his priests and haruspices. It was reported, that after scrutinizing the entrails of victims, and scraping their bones, they revealed, in mysterious language, his own defeat, with the death of his principal adversary ; and that the Barbarian, by accepting the equivalent, expressed his involuntary esteem for the superior merit of Ætius. But the unusual despondency, which seemed to prevail among the Huns, engaged Attila to use the expedient, so familiar to the generals of antiquity, of animating his troops by a military oration ; and his language was that of a king, who had often fought and conquered at their head. He pressed them to consider their past glory, their actual danger, and their future hopes. The same fortune, which opened the deserts and morasses of Scythia to their unarmed valour, which had laid so many warlike nations prostrate at their feet, had reserved the *joys* of this memorable field for the consummation of their victories. The cautious steps of their enemies, their strict alliance, and their advantageous posts, he artfully represented as the effects, not of prudence, but of fear. The Visigoths alone were the strength and nerves of the opposite army ; and the Huns might securely trample on the degenerate Romans, whose close and compact order betrayed their apprehensions, and who were equally incapable of supporting the dangers, or the fatigues, of a day of battle. The doctrine of predestination, so favourable to martial virtue, was carefully inculcated by the king of the Huns ; who assured his subjects, that the warriors, protected by Heaven, were safe and invulnerable amidst the darts of the enemy ; but that the unerring Fates would strike their victims in the bosom of inglorious peace. “ I myself,” continued Attila, “ will throw the first javelin, and the wretch who “ refuses to imitate the example of his sovereign is

“devoted to inevitable death.” The spirit of the Barbarians was rekindled by the presence, the voice, and the example, of their intrepid leader; and Attila, yielding to their impatience, immediately formed his order of battle. At the head of his brave and faithful Huns, he occupied in person the centre of the line. The nations subject to his empire, the Rugians, the Heruli, the Thuringians, the Franks, the Burgundians, were extended, on either hand, over the ample space of the Catalaunian fields; the right wing was commanded by Ardaric, king of the Gepidæ; and the three valiant brothers, who reigned over the Ostrogoths, were posted on the left to oppose the kindred tribes of the Visigoths. The disposition of the allies was regulated by a different principle. Sangiban, the faithless king of the Alani, was placed in the centre; where his motions might be strictly watched, and his treachery might be instantly punished. Ætius assumed the command of the left, and Theodoric of the right, wing; while Torismond still continued to occupy the heights which appear to have stretched on the flank, and perhaps the rear, of the Scythian army. The nations from the Volga to the Atlantic were assembled on the plain of Châlons; but many of these nations had been divided by faction, or conquest, or emigration; and the appearance of similar arms and ensigns, which threatened each other, presented the image of a civil war.

The discipline and tactics of the Greeks and Romans form an interesting part of their national manners. The attentive study of the military operations of Xenophon, or Cæsar, or Frederic, when they are described by the same genius which conceived and executed them, may tend to improve (if such improvement can be wished) the art of destroying the human species. But the battle of Châlons can only

Battle of
Châlons.

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excite our curiosity by the magnitude of the object ; since it was decided by the blind impetuosity of Barbarians, and has been related by partial writers, whose civil or ecclesiastical profession secluded them from the knowledge of military affairs. Cassiodorius, however, had familiarly conversed with many Gothic warriors, who served in that memorable engagement ; “ a conflict,” as they informed him, “ fierce, various, obstinate, and bloody ; such as could not be paralleled, either in the present, or in past ages.” The number of the slain amounted to one hundred and sixty-two thousand, or, according to another account, three hundred thousand persons* ; and these incredible exaggerations suppose a real and effective loss, sufficient to justify the historian’s remark, that whole generations may be swept away, by the madness of kings, in the space of a single hour. After the mutual and repeated discharge of missile weapons, in which the archers of Scythia might signalize their superior dexterity, the cavalry and infantry of the two armies were furiously mingled in closer combat. The Huns, who fought under the eyes of their king, pierced through the feeble and doubtful centre of the allies, separated their wings from each other, and wheeling, with a rapid effort, to the left, directed their whole force against the Visigoths. As Theodoric rode along the ranks, to animate his troops, he received a mortal stroke from the javelin of Andages, a noble Ostrogoth, and immediately fell from his horse. The wounded king was oppressed in the general disorder, and trampled under the feet of his own cavalry ; and this important death served to

* The expressions of Jornandes, or rather of Cassiodorius, are extremely strong. *Bellum atrox, multiplex, immane, pertinax, cui simile nulla usquam narrat antiquitas : ubi talia gesta referuntur, ut nihil esset quod in vitâ suâ conspiceret potuisset egregius, qui hujus miraculi privaretur aspectû.* Dubos (*Hist. Critique*, tom. i. p. 392, 393) attempts to reconcile the 162,000 of Jornandes with the 300,000 of Idatius and Isidore ; by supposing, that the larger number included the total destruction of the war, the effects of disease, the slaughter of the unarmed people, &c.

explain the ambiguous prophecy of the haruspices. CHAP.
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Attila already exulted in the confidence of victory, when the valiant Torismond descended from the hills, and verified the remainder of the prediction. The Visigoths, who had been thrown into confusion by the flight, or defection, of the Alani, gradually restored their order of battle; and the Huns were undoubtedly vanquished, since Attila was compelled to retreat. He had exposed his person with the rashness of a private soldier; but the intrepid troops of the centre had pushed forwards beyond the rest of the line; their attack was faintly supported; their flanks were unguarded; and the conquerors of Scythia and Germany were saved by the approach of the night from a total defeat. They retired within the circle of waggons that fortified their camp; and the dismounted squadrons prepared themselves for a defence, to which neither their arms, nor their temper, were adapted. The event was doubtful: but Attila had secured a last and honourable resource. The saddles and rich furniture of the cavalry were collected by his order into a funeral pile; and the magnanimous Barbarian had resolved, if his intrenchments should be forced, to rush headlong into the flames, and to deprive his enemies of the glory which they might have acquired, by the death or captivity of Attila.

But his enemies had passed the night in equal disorder and anxiety. The inconsiderate courage of Torismond was tempted to urge the pursuit, till he unexpectedly found himself, with a few followers, in the midst of the Scythian waggons. In the confusion of a nocturnal combat, he was thrown from his horse; and the Gothic prince must have perished like his father, if his youthful strength, and the intrepid zeal of his companions, had not rescued him from this dangerous situation. In the same manner,

Retreat of
Attila.

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but on the left of the line, Ætius himself, separated from his allies, ignorant of their victory, and anxious for their fate, encountered and escaped the hostile troops, that were scattered over the plains of Châlons ; and at length reached the camp of the Goths, which he could only fortify with a slight rampart of shields, till the dawn of day. The Imperial general was soon satisfied of the defeat of Attila, who still remained inactive within his intrenchments ; and when he contemplated the bloody scene, he observed, with secret satisfaction, that the loss had principally fallen on the Barbarians. The body of Theodoric, pierced with honourable wounds, was discovered under a heap of the slain : his subjects bewailed the death of their king and father ; but their tears were mingled with songs and acclamations, and his funeral rites were performed in the face of a vanquished enemy. The Goths, clashing their arms, elevated on a buckler his eldest son Torismond, to whom they justly ascribed the glory of their success ; and the new king accepted the obligation of revenge, as a sacred portion of his paternal inheritance. Yet the Goths themselves were astonished by the fierce and undaunted aspect of their formidable antagonist ; and their historian has compared Attila to a lion encompassed in his den, and threatening his hunters with redoubled fury. The kings and nations, who might have deserted his standard in the hour of distress, were made sensible, that the displeasure of their monarch was the most imminent and inevitable danger. All his instruments of martial music incessantly sounded a loud and animating strain of defiance ; and the foremost troops who advanced to the assault were checked, or destroyed, by showers of arrows from every side of the intrenchments. It was determined, in a general council of war, to besiege the king of the Huns in his camp, to intercept

his provisions, and to reduce him to the alternative of a disgraceful treaty, or an unequal combat. But the impatience of the Barbarians soon disdained these cautious and dilatory measures : and the mature policy of Ætius was apprehensive, that, after the extirpation of the Huns, the republic would be oppressed by the pride and power of the Gothic nation. The patrician exerted the superior ascendant of authority and reason, to calm the passions, which the son of Theodoric considered as a duty ; represented, with seeming affection, and real truth, the dangers of absence and delay ; and persuaded Torismond to disappoint, by his speedy return, the ambitious designs of his brothers, who might occupy the throne and treasures of Thoulouse. After the departure of the Goths, and the separation of the allied army, Attila was surprised at the vast silence that reigned over the plains of Châlons : the suspicion of some hostile stratagem detained him several days within the circle of his waggons ; and his retreat beyond the Rhine confessed the last victory which was achieved in the name of the Western empire. Meroveus and his Franks observing a prudent distance, and magnifying the opinion of their strength, by the numerous fires which they kindled every night, continued to follow the rear of the Huns, till they reached the confines of Thuringia. The Thuringians served in the army of Attila : they traversed, both in their march and in their return, the territories of the Franks ; and it was perhaps in this war that they exercised the cruelties, which, about fourscore years afterwards, were revenged by the son of Clovis. They massacred their hostages, as well as their captives ; two hundred young maidens were tortured with exquisite and unrelenting rage ; their bodies were torn asunder by wild horses, or their bones were crushed under the weight of rolling wag-

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gons ; and their unburied limbs were abandoned on the public roads, as a prey to dogs and vultures. Such were those savage ancestors, whose imaginary virtues have sometimes excited the praise and envy of civilized ages.

Invasion of
Italy by
Attila,
A. D. 452.

Neither the spirit, nor the forces, nor the reputation of Attila, were impaired by the failure of the Gallic expedition. In the ensuing spring, he repeated his demand of the princess Honoria, and her patrimonial treasures. The demand was again rejected, or eluded ; and the indignant lover immediately took the field, passed the Alps, invaded Italy, and besieged Aquileia with an innumerable host of Barbarians. Those Barbarians were unskilled in the methods of conducting a regular siege, which even among the ancients required some knowledge, or at least some practice, of the mechanic arts. But the labour of many thousand provincials and captives, whose lives were sacrificed without pity, might execute the most painful and dangerous work. The skill of the Roman artists might be corrupted to the destruction of their country. The walls of Aquileia were assaulted by a formidable train of battering rams, moveable turrets, and engines, that threw stones, darts, and fire : and the monarch of the Huns employed the forcible impulse of hope, fear, emulation, and interest, to subvert the only barrier which delayed the conquest of Italy. Aquileia was at that period one of the richest, the most populous, and the strongest of the maritime cities of the Adriatic coast. The Gothic auxiliaries, who appear to have served under their native princes Alaric and Antala, communicated their intrepid spirit ; and the citizens still remembered the glorious and successful resistance, which their ancestors had opposed to a fierce, inexorable Barbarian, who disgraced the majesty of the Roman purple. Three months were

consumed without effect in the siege of Aquileia; till the want of provisions, and the clamours of his army, compelled Attila to relinquish the enterprise; and reluctantly to issue his orders, that the troops should strike their tents the next morning, and begin their retreat. But as he rode round the walls, pensive, angry, and disappointed, he observed a stork, preparing to leave her nest, in one of the towers, and to fly with her infant family towards the country. He seized, with the ready penetration of a statesman, this trifling incident, which chance had offered to superstition; and exclaimed, in a loud and cheerful tone, that such a domestic bird, so constantly attached to human society, would never have abandoned her ancient seats, unless those towers had been devoted to impending ruin and solitude. The favourable omen inspired an assurance of victory; the siege was renewed, and prosecuted with fresh vigour; a large breach was made in the part of the wall from whence the stork had taken her flight; the Huns mounted to the assault with irresistible fury; and the succeeding generation could scarcely discover the ruins of Aquileia. After this dreadful chastisement, Attila pursued his march; and as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Corcordia, and Padua, were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. The inland towns, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo, were exposed to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns. Milan and Pavia submitted, without resistance, to the loss of their wealth; and applauded the unusual clemency, which preserved from the flames the public, as well as private, buildings; and spared the lives of the captive multitude. The popular traditions of Comum, Turin, or Modena, may justly be suspected; yet they concur with more authentic evidence to prove, that Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of mo-

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dern Lombardy ; which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and Apennine. When he took possession of the royal palace of Milan, he was surprised, and offended, at the sight of a picture which represented the Cæsars seated on their throne, and the princes of Scythia prostrate at their feet. The revenge which Attila inflicted on this monument of Roman vanity was harmless and ingenious. He commanded a painter to reverse the figures and the attitudes ; and the emperors were delineated on the same canvas, approaching in a suppliant posture to empty their bags of tributary gold before the throne of the Scythian monarch. The spectators must have confessed the truth and propriety of the alteration ; and were perhaps tempted to apply, on this singular occasion, the well-known fable of the dispute between the lion and the man.

Foundation
of the re-
public of
Venice.

It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila, that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod. Yet the savage destroyer undesignedly laid the foundations of a republic, which revived, in the feudal state of Europe, the art and spirit of commercial industry. The celebrated name of Venice, or Venetia, was formerly diffused over a large and fertile province of Italy, from the confines of Pannonia to the river Addua, and from the Po to the Rhætian and Julian Alps. Before the irruption of the Barbarians, fifty Venetian cities flourished in peace and prosperity : Aquileia was placed in the most conspicuous station : but the ancient dignity of Padua was supported by agriculture and manufactures ; and the property of five hundred citizens, who were entitled to the equestrian rank, must have amounted, at the strictest computation, to one million seven hundred thousand pounds. Many families of Aquileia, Padua, and the adjacent towns, who fled

from the sword of the Huns, found a safe, though obscure, refuge in the neighbouring islands*. At the extremity of the Gulf, where the Hadriatic feebly imitates the tides of the ocean, near a hundred small islands are separated by shallow water from the continent, and protected from the waves by several long slips of land, which admit the entrance of vessels through some secret and narrow channels. Till the middle of the fifth century, these remote and sequestered spots remained without cultivation, with few inhabitants, and almost without a name. But the manners of the Venetian fugitives, their arts and their government, were gradually formed by their new situation; and one of the epistles of Cassiodorius† which describes their condition about seventy years afterwards, may be considered as the primitive monument of the republic. The minister of Theodoric compares them, in his quaint declamatory style, to water-fowl, who had fixed their nests on the bosom of the waves; and though he allows that the Venetian provinces had formerly contained many noble families, he insinuates, that they were now reduced by misfortune to the same level of humble poverty. Fish was the common, and almost the universal, food of every rank: their only treasure consisted in the plenty of salt, which they extracted from the sea: and the exchange of that commodity, so essential to human life, was substituted in the neighbouring markets to the currency of gold and silver. A people,

* This emigration is not attested by any contemporary evidence: but the fact is proved by the event, and the circumstances might be preserved by tradition. The citizens of Aquileia retired to the Isle of Gradus, those of Padua to Rivus Altus, or Rialto, where the city of Venice was afterwards built, &c.

† Cassiodor. Variar. l. 12, epist. 24. Maffei (Verona Illustrata, part i. p. 240—254.) has translated and explained this curious letter, in the spirit of a learned antiquarian and a faithful subject, who considered Venice as the only legitimate offspring of the Roman republic. He fixes the date of the epistle, and consequently the præfecture, of Cassiodorius, A. D. 523; and the marquis's authority has the more weight, as he had prepared an edition of his works, and actually published a dissertation on the true orthography of his name. See Osservazioni Letteraire, tom. ii. p. 290—339.

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whose habitations might be doubtfully assigned to the earth or water, soon became alike familiar with the two elements ; and the demands of avarice succeeded to those of necessity. The islanders, who, from Grado to Chiozza, were intimately connected with each other, penetrated into the heart of Italy, by the secure, though laborious, navigation of the rivers and inland canals. Their vessels, which were continually increasing in size and number, visited all the harbours of the Gulf ; and the marriage, which Venice annually celebrates with the Hadriatic, was contracted in her early infancy. The epistle of Cassiodorus, the Prætorian præfect, is addressed to the maritime tribunes : and he exhorts them, in a mild tone of authority, to animate the zeal of their countrymen for the public service, which required their assistance to transport the magazines of wine and oil from the province of Istria to the royal city of Ravenna. The ambiguous office of these magistrates is explained by the tradition, that, in the twelve principal islands, twelve tribunes, or judges, were created by an annual and popular election. The existence of the Venetian republic under the Gothic kingdom of Italy is attested by the same authentic record, which annihilates their lofty claim of original and perpetual independence.

Attila gives
peace to the
Romans.

The Italians, who had long since renounced the exercise of arms, were surprised, after forty years' peace, by the approach of a formidable Barbarian, whom they abhorred, as the enemy of their religion, as well as of their republic. Amidst the general consternation, Ætius alone was incapable of fear ; but it was impossible that he should achieve, alone, and unassisted, any military exploits worthy of his former renown. The Barbarians who had defended Gaul refused to march to the relief of Italy ; and the succours promised by the Eastern emperor were

distant and doubtful. Since Ætius, at the head of his domestic troops, still maintained the field, and harassed or retarded the march of Attila, he never showed himself more truly great than at the time when his conduct was blamed by an ignorant and ungrateful people. If the mind of Valentinian had been susceptible of any generous sentiments, he would have chosen such a general for his example and his guide. But the timid grandson of Theodosius, instead of sharing the dangers, escaped from the sound of war; and his hasty retreat from Ravenna to Rome, from an impregnable fortress to an open capital, betrayed his secret intention of abandoning Italy, as soon as the danger should approach his Imperial person. This shameful abdication was suspended, however, by the spirit of doubt and delay, which commonly adheres to pusillanimous counsels, and sometimes corrects their pernicious tendency. The Western emperor, with the senate and people of Rome, embraced the more salutary resolution of deprecating, by a solemn and suppliant embassy, the wrath of Attila. This important commission was accepted by Avienus, who, from his birth and riches, his consular dignity, the numerous train of his clients, and his personal abilities, held the first rank in the Roman senate. The specious and artful character of Avienus was admirably qualified to conduct a negotiation either of public or private interest: his colleague Trigetius had exercised the Prætorian præfecture of Italy; and Leo, bishop of Rome, consented to expose his life for the safety of his flock. The genius of Leo was exercised and displayed in the public misfortunes; and he has deserved the appellation of *Great*, by the successful zeal with which he laboured to establish his opinions and his authority, under the venerable names of orthodox faith and ecclesiastical discipline. The Roman ambassadors were introduced to the tent of Attila, as

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he lay encamped at the place where the slow-winding Mincius is lost in the foaming waves of the lake Benacus, and trampled, with his Scythian cavalry, the farms of Catullus and Virgil*. The Barbarian monarch listened with favourable, and even respectful, attention; and the deliverance of Italy was purchased by the immense ransom, or dowry, of the princess Honoria. The state of his army might facilitate the treaty, and hasten his retreat. Their martial spirit was relaxed by the wealth and indolence of a warm climate. The shepherds of the North, whose ordinary food consisted of milk and raw flesh, indulged themselves too freely in the use of bread, of wine, and of meat prepared and seasoned by the arts of cookery; and the progress of disease revenged in some measure the injuries of the Italians. When Attila declared his resolution of carrying his victorious arms to the gates of Rome, he was admonished by his friends, as well as by his enemies, that Alaric had not long survived the conquest of the eternal city. His mind, superior to real danger, was assaulted by imaginary terrors; nor could he escape the influence of superstition, which had so often been subservient to his designs†. The pressing eloquence of Leo, his majestic aspect, and sacerdotal robes, excited the veneration of Attila for the spiritual father of the Christians. The apparition of the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, who menaced the Barbarian with instant death, if he rejected the prayer of their successor, is one of the noblest legends of ecclesiastical tradition. The safety of Rome might deserve the interposition of

* The Marquis Maffei (*Verona Illustrata*, part i. p. 95. 129. 221. part ii. p. 2. 6.) has illustrated with taste and learning this interesting topography. He places the interview of Attila and St. Leo near Ariolica, or Ardelica, now Peschiera, at the conflux of the lake and river; ascertains the villa of Catullus, in the delightful peninsula of Sarmio, and discovers the Andes of Virgil, in the village of Bades, precisely situate quâ se subducere colles incipiunt, where the Veronese hills imperceptibly slope down into the plain of Mantua.

† The historian Priscus had positively mentioned the effect which this example produced on the mind of Attila. *Jornandes*, c. 42, p. 673.

celestial beings ; and some indulgence is due to a fable, which has been represented by the pencil of Raphael, and the chisel of Algardi*.

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Before the king of the Huns evacuated Italy, he threatened to return more dreadful, and more implacable, if his bride, the princess Honoria, were not delivered to his ambassadors within the term stipulated by the treaty. Yet, in the meanwhile, Attila relieved his tender anxiety, by adding a beautiful maid, whose name was Ildico, to the list of his innumerable wives. Their marriage was celebrated with barbaric pomp and festivity, at his wooden palace beyond the Danube ; and the monarch, oppressed with wine and sleep, retired, at a late hour, from the banquet to the nuptial bed. His attendants continued to respect his repose, the greatest part of the ensuing day, till the unusual silence alarmed their fears and suspicions ; and, after attempting to awaken Attila by loud and repeated cries, they at length broke into the royal apartment. They found the trembling bride sitting by the bedside, hiding her face with her veil, and lamenting her own danger, as well as the death of the king, who had expired during the night. An artery had suddenly burst ; and as Attila lay in a supine posture, he was suffocated by a torrent of blood, which, instead of finding a passage through the nostrils, regurgitated into the lungs and stomach. His body was solemnly exposed in the midst of the plain, under a silken pavilion ; and the chosen squadrons of the Huns, wheeling round in measured evolutions, chanted a funeral song to the memory of a hero, glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world. According to their national

The death
of Attila,
A. D. 453.

* The picture of Raphael is in the Vatican ; the basso (or perhaps the alto) relievo of Algardi, on one of the altars of St. Peter (see Dubos, *Reflexions sur la Poesie et sur la Peinture*, tom. i. p. 519, 520).

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custom, the Barbarians cut off a part of their hair, gashed their faces with unseemly wounds, and bewailed their valiant leader as he deserved, not with the tears of women, but with the blood of warriors. The remains of Attila were inclosed within three coffins, of gold, of silver, and of iron, and privately buried in the night: the spoils of nations were thrown into his grave; the captives who had opened the ground were inhumanly massacred; and the same Huns, who had indulged such excessive grief, feasted, with dissolute and intemperate mirth, about the recent sepulchre of their king. It was reported at Constantinople, that on the fortunate night in which he expired, Marcian beheld in a dream the bow of Attila broken asunder: and the report may be allowed to prove how seldom the image of that formidable Barbarian was absent from the mind of a Roman emperor.

Destruc-
tion of his
empire.

The revolution which subverted the empire of the Huns established the fame of Attila, whose genius alone had sustained the huge and disjointed fabric. After his death, the boldest chieftains aspired to the rank of kings; the most powerful kings refused to acknowledge a superior; and the numerous sons, whom so many various mothers bore to the deceased monarch, divided and disputed, like a private inheritance, the sovereign command of the nations of Germany and Scythia. The bold Ardaric felt and represented the disgrace of this servile partition; and his subjects, the warlike Gepidæ, with the Ostrogoths, under the conduct of three valiant brothers, encouraged their allies to vindicate the rights of freedom and royalty. In a bloody and decisive conflict on the banks of the river Netad, in Pannonia, the lance of the Gepidæ, the sword of the Goths, the arrows of the Huns, the Suevic infantry, the light arms of the Heruli, and the heavy weapons of the Alani, en-

countered or supported each other ; and the victory of Ardaric was accompanied with the slaughter of thirty thousand of his enemies. Ellac, the eldest son of Attila, lost his life and crown in the memorable battle of Netad : his early valour had raised him to the throne of the Acatzires, a Scythian people, whom he subdued ; and his father, who loved the superior merit, would have envied the death, of Ellac. His brother Dengisich, with an army of Huns, still formidable in their flight and ruin, maintained his ground above fifteen years on the banks of the Danube. The palace of Attila, with the old country of Dacia, from the Carpathian hills to the Euxine, became the seat of a new power, which was erected by Ardaric, king of the Gepidæ. The Pannonian conquests, from Vienna to Sirmium, were occupied by the Ostrogoths ; and the settlements of the tribes, who had so bravely asserted their native freedom, were irregularly distributed, according to the measure of their respective strength. Surrounded and oppressed by the multitude of his father's slaves, the kingdom of Dengisich was confined to the circle of his waggons ; his desperate courage urged him to invade the Eastern empire ; he fell in battle ; and his head, ignominiously exposed in the Hippodrome, exhibited a grateful spectacle to the people of Constantinople. Attila had fondly or superstitiously believed, that Irnac, the youngest of his sons, was destined to perpetuate the glories of his race. The character of that prince, who attempted to moderate the rashness of his brother Dengisich, was more suitable to the declining condition of the Huns ; and Irnac, with his subject hordes, retired into the heart of the Lesser Scythia. They were soon overwhelmed by a torrent of new Barbarians, who followed the same road which their own ancestors had formerly discovered. The *Geougen*, or Avars, whose re-

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sidence is assigned by the Greek writers to the shores of the ocean, impelled the adjacent tribes; till at length the Igours of the North, issuing from the cold Siberian regions, which produce the most valuable furs, spread themselves over the desert, as far as the Boristhenes and Caspian gates; and finally extinguished the empire of the Huns.

Valentinian
murders the
patrician
Ætius,
A. D. 454,

Such an event might contribute to the safety of the Eastern empire, under the reign of a prince who conciliated the friendship, without forfeiting the esteem, of the Barbarians. But the emperor of the West, the feeble and dissolute Valentinian, who had reached his thirty-fifth year without attaining the age of reason or courage, abused this apparent security, to undermine the foundations of his own throne, by the murder of the patrician Ætius. From the instinct of a base and jealous mind, he hated the man who was universally celebrated as the terror of the Barbarians, and the support of the republic; and his new favourite, the eunuch Heraclius, awakened the emperor from the supine lethargy, which might be disguised, during the life of Placidia, by the excuse of filial piety. The fame of Ætius, his wealth and dignity, the numerous and martial train of Barbarian followers, his powerful dependents, who filled the civil offices of the state, and the hopes of his son Gaudentius, who was already contracted to Eudoxia, the emperor's daughter, had raised him above the rank of a subject. The ambitious designs, of which he was secretly accused, excited the fears, as well as the resentment, of Valentinian. Ætius himself, supported by the consciousness of his merit, his services, and perhaps his innocence, seems to have maintained a haughty and indiscreet behaviour. The patrician offended his sovereign by a hostile declaration; he aggravated the offence, by compelling him to ratify, with a solemn oath, a treaty of reconciliation

and alliance ; he proclaimed his suspicions, he neglected his safety : and from a vain confidence that the enemy, whom he despised, was incapable even of a manly crime, he rashly ventured his person in the palace of Rome. Whilst he urged, perhaps with intemperate vehemence, the marriage of his son ; Valentinian, drawing his sword, the first sword he had ever drawn, plunged it in the breast of a general who had saved his empire : his courtiers and eunuchs ambitiously struggled to imitate their master ; and Ætius, pierced with a hundred wounds, fell dead in the royal presence. Boethius, the Prætorian præfect, was killed at the same moment ; and before the event could be divulged, the principal friends of the patrician were summoned to the palace, and separately murdered. The horrid deed, palliated by the specious names of justice and necessity, was immediately communicated by the emperor to his soldiers, his subjects, and his allies. The nations, who were strangers or enemies to Ætius, generously deplored the unworthy fate of a hero : the Barbarians, who had been attached to his service, dissembled their grief and resentment ; and the public contempt, which had been so long entertained for Valentinian, was at once converted into deep and universal abhorrence. Such sentiments seldom pervade the walls of a palace ; yet the emperor was confounded by the honest reply of a Roman, whose approbation he had not disdained to solicit. “ I am ignorant, sir, of your motives or provocations ; I only know, that you have acted like a man who cuts off his right hand with his left.”

The luxury of Rome seems to have attracted the long and frequent visits of Valentinian ; who was consequently more despised at Rome than in any other part of his dominions. A republican spirit was insensibly revived in the senate, as their authority,

and ravishes
the wife of
Maximus.

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and even their supplies, became necessary for the support of his feeble government. The stately demeanour of an hereditary monarch offended their pride ; and the pleasures of Valentinian were injurious to the peace and honour of noble families. The birth of the empress Eudoxia was equal to his own, and her charms and tender affection deserved those testimonies of love, which her inconstant husband dissipated in vague and unlawful amours. Petronius Maximus, a wealthy senator of the Anician family, who had been twice consul, was possessed of a chaste and beautiful wife : her obstinate resistance served only to irritate the desires of Valentinian ; and he resolved to accomplish them either by stratagem or force. Deep gaming was one of the vices of the court : the emperor, who, by chance or contrivance, had gained from Maximus a considerable sum, uncourteously exacted his ring as a security for the debt ; and sent it by a trusty messenger to his wife, with an order, in her husband's name, that she should immediately attend the empress Eudoxia. The unsuspecting wife of Maximus was conveyed in her litter to the Imperial palace ; the emissaries of her impatient lover conducted her to a remote and silent bed-chamber ; and Valentinian violated, without remorse, the laws of hospitality. Her tears, when she returned home ; her deep affliction ; and her bitter reproaches against her husband, whom she considered as the accomplice of his own shame, excited Maximus to a just revenge ; the desire of revenge was stimulated by ambition ; and he might reasonably aspire, by the free suffrage of the Roman senate, to the throne of a detested and despicable rival. Valentinian, who supposed that every human breast was devoid, like his own, of friendship and gratitude, had imprudently admitted among his guards several domestics and followers of Ætius. Two of these, of Barbarian race,

were persuaded to execute a sacred and honourable duty, by punishing with death the assassin of their patron: and their intrepid courage did not long expect a favourable moment. Whilst Valentinian amused himself in the field of Mars with the spectacle of some military sports, they suddenly rushed upon him with drawn weapons, despatched the guilty Heraclius, and stabbed the emperor to the heart, without the least opposition from his numerous train, who seemed to rejoice in the tyrant's death. Such was the fate of Valentinian the Third, the last Roman emperor of the family of Theodosius. He faithfully imitated the hereditary weakness of his cousin and his two uncles, without inheriting the gentleness, the purity, the innocence, which alleviate, in their characters, the want of spirit and ability. Valentinian was less excusable, since he had passions, without virtues: even his religion was questionable; and though he never deviated into the paths of heresy, he scandalized the pious Christians by his attachment to the profane arts of magic and divination.

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Death of
Valenti-
nian,
A. D. 445.
March 16.

As early as the time of Cicero and Varro, it was the opinion of the Roman augurs, that the *twelve vultures*, which Romulus had seen, represented the *twelve centuries* assigned for the fatal period of his city. This prophecy, disregarded, perhaps, in the season of health and prosperity, inspired the people with gloomy apprehensions, when the twelfth century, clouded with disgrace and misfortune, was almost elapsed*; and even posterity must acknowledge with

Symptoms
of decay
and ruin.

* According to Varro, the twelfth century would expire A. D. 447, but the uncertainty of the true era of Rome might allow some latitude of anticipation or delay. The poets of the age, Claudian (*de Bell. Getico*, 265), and Sidonius (in *Panegy. Avit.* 357), may be admitted as fair witnesses of the popular opinion.

Jam reputant annos, interceptoque volatū
Vulturis, incidunt properatis sæcula metis.

Jam prope fata tui bisseas Vulturis alas
Implebant; scis namque tuos, scis Roma, labores.

See Dubos, *Hist. Critique*, tom. i. p. 340—346.

some surprise, that the arbitrary interpretation of an accidental or fabulous circumstance has been seriously verified in the downfall of the Western empire. But its fall was announced by a clearer omen than the flight of vultures: the Roman government appeared every day less formidable to its enemies, more odious and oppressive to its subjects. The taxes were multiplied with the public distress; economy was neglected in proportion as it became necessary; and the injustice of the rich shifted the unequal burden from themselves to the people, whom they defrauded of the *indulgences* that might sometimes have alleviated their misery. The severe inquisition, which confiscated their goods, and tortured their persons, compelled the subjects of Valentinian to prefer the more simple tyranny of the Barbarians, to fly to the woods and mountains, or to embrace the vile and abject condition of mercenary servants. They abjured and abhorred the name of Roman citizens, which had formerly excited the ambition of mankind. The Armorican provinces of Gaul, and the greatest part of Spain, were thrown into a state of disorderly independence, by the confederations of the Bagaudæ; and the Imperial ministers pursued with proscriptive laws, and ineffectual arms, the rebels whom they had made. If all the Barbarian conquerors had been annihilated in the same hour, their total destruction would not have restored the empire of the West: and if Rome still survived, she survived the loss of freedom, of virtue, and of honour.

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Sack of Rome by Genseric, King of the Vandals.—His naval Depredations.—Succession of the last Emperors of the West, Maximus, Avitus, Majorian, Severus, Anthemius, Olybrius, Glycerius, Nepos, Augustulus.—Total Extinction of the Western Empire.—Reign of Odoacer, the first Barbarian King of Italy.

THE loss or desolation of the provinces, from the ocean to the Alps, impaired the glory and greatness of Rome : her internal prosperity was irretrievably destroyed by the separation of Africa. The rapacious Vandals confiscated the patrimonial estates of the senators, and intercepted the regular subsidies, which relieved the poverty, and encouraged the idleness, of the plebeians. The distress of the Romans was soon aggravated by an unexpected attack ; and the province, so long cultivated for their use by industrious and obedient subjects, was armed against them by an ambitious Barbarian. The Vandals and Alani, who followed the successful standard of Genseric, had acquired a rich and fertile territory, which stretched along the coast above ninety days journey from Tangier to Tripoli ; but their narrow limits were pressed and confined, on either side, by the sandy desert and the Mediterranean. The discovery and conquest of the Black nations, that might dwell beneath the torrid zone, could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric : but he cast his eyes towards the sea ; he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance. The woods of mount Atlas afforded an inexhaustible nursery of timber ; his new subjects

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Naval
power of the
Vandals,
A. D. 439
—455.

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were skilled in the arts of navigation and ship-building; he animated his daring Vandals to embrace a mode of warfare which would render every maritime country accessible to their arms; the Moors and Africans were allured by the hopes of plunder; and, after an interval of six centuries, the fleets that issued from the port of Carthage again claimed the empire of the Mediterranean. The success of the Vandals, the conquest of Sicily, the sack of Palermo, and the frequent descents on the coast of Leucania, awakened and alarmed the mother of Valentinian, and the sister of Theodosius. Alliances were formed; and armaments, expensive and ineffectual, were prepared, for the destruction of the common enemy; who reserved his courage to encounter those dangers which his policy could not prevent or elude. The designs of the Roman government were repeatedly baffled by his artful delays, ambiguous promises, and apparent concessions; and the interposition of his formidable confederate, the king of the Huns, recalled the emperors from the conquest of Africa to the care of their domestic safety. The revolutions of the palace, which left the Western empire without a defender, and without a lawful prince, dispelled the apprehensions, and stimulated the avarice, of Genseric. He immediately equipped a numerous fleet of Vandals and Moors, and cast anchor at the mouth of the Tyber, about three months after the death of Valentinian, and the elevation of Maximus to the Imperial throne.

The character and reign of the emperor Maximus, A. D. 455. March 17.

The private life of the senator Petronius Maximus was often alleged as a rare example of human felicity. His birth was noble and illustrious, since he descended from the Anician family; his dignity was supported by an adequate patrimony in land and money; and these advantages of fortune were ac-

accompanied with liberal arts and decent manners, which adorn or imitate the inestimable gifts of genius and virtue. The luxury of his palace and table was hospitable and elegant. Whenever Maximus appeared in public, he was surrounded by a train of grateful and obsequious clients; and it is possible that among these clients, he might deserve and possess some real friends. His merit was rewarded by the favour of the prince and senate: he thrice exercised the office of Prætorian præfect of Italy; he was twice invested with the consulship, and he obtained the rank of patrician. These civil honours were not incompatible with the enjoyment of leisure and tranquillity; his hours, according to the demands of pleasure or reason, were accurately distributed by a water-clock; and this avarice of time may be allowed to prove the sense which Maximus entertained of his own happiness. The injury which he received from the emperor Valentinian appears to excuse the most bloody revenge. Yet a philosopher might have reflected, that, if the resistance of his wife had been sincere, her chastity was still inviolate, and that it could never be restored if she had consented to the will of the adulterer. A patriot would have hesitated, before he plunged himself and his country into those inevitable calamities, which must follow the extinction of the royal house of Theodosius. The imprudent Maximus disregarded these salutary considerations: he gratified his resentment and ambition; he saw the bleeding corpse of Valentinian at his feet; and he heard himself saluted emperor by the unanimous voice of the senate and people. But the day of his inauguration was the last day of his happiness. He was imprisoned (such is the lively expression of Sidonius) in the palace; and after passing a sleepless night, he sighed that he had attained the summit of his wishes, and aspired only to descend from the

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dangerous elevation. Oppressed by the weight of the diadem, he communicated his anxious thoughts to his friend and quæstor Fulgentius; and when he looked back with unavailing regret on the secure pleasures of his former life, the emperor exclaimed, "O fortunate Damocles, thy reign began and ended "with the same dinner:" a well-known allusion, which Fulgentius afterwards repeated as an instructive lesson for princes and subjects.

His death,
A. D. 455,
June 12.

The reign of Maximus continued about three months. His hours, of which he had lost the command, were disturbed by remorse, or guilt, or terror, and his throne was shaken by the seditions of the soldiers, the people, and the confederate Barbarians. The marriage of his son Palladius with the eldest daughter of the late emperor might tend to establish the hereditary succession of his family; but the violence which he offered to the empress Eudoxia could proceed only from the blind impulse of lust or revenge. His own wife, the cause of these tragic events, had been seasonably removed by death; and the widow of Valentinian was compelled to violate her decent mourning, perhaps her real grief, and to submit to the embraces of a presumptuous usurper, whom she suspected as the assassin of her deceased husband. These suspicions were soon justified by the indiscreet confession of Maximus himself; and he wantonly provoked the hatred of his reluctant bride, who was still conscious that she descended from a line of emperors. From the East, however, Eudoxia could not hope to obtain any effectual assistance: her father and her aunt Pulcheria were dead; her mother languished at Jerusalem in disgrace and exile; and the sceptre of Constantinople was in the hands of a stranger. She directed her eyes towards Carthage; secretly implored the aid of the king of the Vandals; and persuaded Genseric

to improve the fair opportunity of disguising his rapacious designs by the specious names of honour, justice, and compassion. Whatever abilities Maximus might have shown in a subordinate station, he was found incapable of administering an empire; and though he might easily have been informed of the naval preparations which were made on the opposite shores of Africa, he expected with supine indifference the approach of the enemy, without adopting any measures of defence, of negotiation, or of a timely retreat. When the Vandals disembarked at the mouth of the Tyber, the emperor was suddenly roused from his lethargy by the clamours of a trembling and exasperated multitude. The only hope which presented itself to his astonished mind was that of a precipitate flight, and he exhorted the senators to imitate the example of their prince. But no sooner did Maximus appear in the streets, than he was assaulted by a shower of stones: a Roman, or a Burgundian soldier, claimed the honour of the first wound; his mangled body was ignominiously cast into the Tyber; the Roman people rejoiced in the punishment which they had inflicted on the author of the public calamities; and the domestics of Eudoxia signalized their zeal in the service of their mistress.

On the third day after the tumult, Genseric boldly advanced from the port of Ostia to the gates of the defenceless city. Instead of a sally of the Roman youth, there issued from the gates an unarmed and venerable procession of the bishop at the head of his clergy. The fearless spirit of Leo, his authority and eloquence, *again* mitigated the fierceness of a Barbarian conqueror: the king of the Vandals promised to spare the unresisting multitude, to protect the buildings from fire, and to exempt the captives from torture; and although such orders were neither

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Sack of
Rome by
the Vandals,
A. D. 455,
June 15—
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seriously given, nor strictly obeyed, the mediation of Leo was glorious to himself, and in some degree beneficial to his country. But Rome and its inhabitants were delivered to the licentiousness of the Vandals and Moors, whose blind passions revenged the injuries of Carthage. The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights ; and all that yet remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric. Among the spoils, the splendid relics of two temples, or rather of two religions, exhibited a memorable example of the vicissitude of human and divine things. Since the abolition of Paganism, the Capitol had been violated and abandoned ; yet the statues of the gods and heroes were still respected, and the curious roof of gilt bronze was reserved for the rapacious hands of Genseric. The holy instruments of the Jewish worship, the gold table, and the gold candlestick with seven branches, originally framed according to the particular instructions of God himself, and which were placed in the sanctuary of his temple, had been ostentatiously displayed to the Roman people in the triumph of Titus. They were afterwards deposited in the temple of Peace ; and at the end of four hundred years, the spoils of Jerusalem were transferred from Rome to Carthage, by a Barbarian who derived his origin from the shores of the Baltic. These ancient monuments might attract the notice of curiosity, as well as of avarice. But the Christian churches afforded more plentiful materials for sacrilege ; and the pious liberality of pope Leo, who melted six silver vases, the gift of Constantine, each of a hundred pounds weight, is an evidence of the damage which he attempted to repair. In the forty-five years, that had elapsed since the Gothic invasion, the pomp and luxury of Rome were in some measure restored ; and it was difficult either to escape, or to satisfy, the ava-

rice of a conqueror, who possessed leisure to collect, and ships to transport, the wealth of the capital. The imperial ornaments of the palace, the magnificent furniture and wardrobe, the sideboards of massy plate, were accumulated with disorderly rapine: the gold and silver amounted to several thousand talents; yet even the brass and copper were laboriously removed. Eudoxia herself, who advanced to meet her friend and deliverer, soon bewailed the imprudence of her own conduct. She was rudely stripped of her jewels; and the unfortunate empress, with her two daughters, the only surviving remains of the great Theodosius, was compelled, as a captive, to follow the haughty Vandal; who immediately hoisted sail, and returned with a prosperous navigation to the port of Carthage. Many thousand Romans of both sexes, chosen for some useful or agreeable qualifications, reluctantly embarked on board the fleet of Genseric; and their distress was aggravated by the unfeeling Barbarians, who, in the division of the booty, separated the wives from their husbands, and the children from their parents. The charity of Deogratias, bishop of Carthage, was their only consolation and support. He generously sold the gold and silver plate of the church to purchase the freedom of some, to alleviate the slavery of others, and to assist the wants and infirmities of a captive multitude, whose health was impaired by the hardships which they had suffered in their passage from Italy to Africa. By his order, two spacious churches were converted into hospitals: the sick were distributed in convenient beds, and liberally supplied with food and medicines; and the aged prelate repeated his visits both in the day and night, with an assiduity that surpassed his strength, and a tender sympathy which enhanced the value of his services. Compare

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The emperor
Avitus,
A. D. 455,
July 10.

this scene with the field of Cannæ; and judge between Hannibal and the successor of St. Cyprian.

The deaths of Ætius and Valentinian had relaxed the ties which held the Barbarians of Gaul in peace and subordination. The sea-coast was infested by the Saxons; the Alemanni and the Franks advanced from the Rhine to the Seine; and the ambition of the Goths seemed to meditate more extensive and permanent conquests. The emperor Maximus relieved himself, by a judicious choice, from the weight of these distant cares; he silenced the solicitations of his friends, listened to the voice of fame, and promoted a stranger to the general command of the forces in Gaul. Avitus, the stranger, whose merit was so nobly rewarded, descended from a wealthy and honourable family in the diocese of Auvergne. The convulsions of the times urged him to embrace, with the same ardour, the civil and military professions; and the indefatigable youth blended the studies of literature and jurisprudence with the exercise of arms and hunting. Thirty years of his life were laudably spent in the public service; he alternately displayed his talents in war and negotiation; and the soldier of Ætius, after executing the most important embassies, was raised to the station of Prætorian præfect of Gaul. Either the merit of Avitus excited envy, or his moderation was desirous of repose, since he calmly retired to an estate, which he possessed in the neighbourhood of Clermont. A copious stream, issuing from the mountain, and falling headlong in many a loud and foaming cascade, discharged its waters into a lake about two miles in length, and the villa was pleasantly seated on the margin of the lake. The baths, the porticoes, the summer and winter apartments, were adapted to the purposes of luxury and use; and the adjacent country

afforded the various prospects of woods, pastures, and meadows. In this retreat, where Avitus amused his leisure with books, rural sports, the practice of husbandry, and the society of his friends, he received the imperial diploma, which constituted him master-general of the cavalry and infantry of Gaul. He assumed the military command; the Barbarians suspended their fury; and whatever means he might employ, whatever concessions he might be forced to make, the people enjoyed the benefits of actual tranquillity. But the fate of Gaul depended on the Visigoths; and the Roman general, less attentive to his dignity than to the public interest, did not disdain to visit Thoulouse in the character of an ambassador. He was received with courteous hospitality by Theodoric, the king of the Goths; but while Avitus laid the foundations of a solid alliance with that powerful nation, he was astonished by the intelligence, that the emperor Maximus was slain, and that Rome had been pillaged by the Vandals. A vacant throne, which he might ascend without guilt or danger, tempted his ambition; and the Visigoths were easily persuaded to support his claim by their irresistible suffrage. They loved the person of Avitus; they respected his virtues; and they were not insensible of the advantage, as well as honour, of giving an emperor to the West. The season was now approaching, in which the annual assembly of the seven provinces was held at Arles; their deliberations might perhaps be influenced by the presence of Theodoric, and his martial brothers; but their choice would naturally incline to the most illustrious of their countrymen. Avitus, after a decent resistance, accepted the Imperial diadem from the representatives of Gaul; and his election was ratified by the acclamations of the Barbarians and provincials. The formal consent of Marcian, emperor of the East,

A. D. 455,
Aug. 15.

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Character of
Theodoric,
king of the
Visigoths,
A. D. 453
—466.

was solicited and obtained : but the senate, Rome, and Italy, though humbled by their recent calamities, submitted with a secret murmur to the presumption of the Gallic usurper.

Theodoric, to whom Avitus was indebted for the purple, had acquired the Gothic sceptre by the murder of his elder brother Torismond ; and he justified this atrocious deed by the design which his predecessor had formed of violating his alliance with the empire. Such a crime might not be incompatible with the virtues of a Barbarian ; but the manners of Theodoric were gentle and humane ; and posterity may contemplate without terror the original picture of a Gothic king, whom Sidonius had intimately observed, in the hours of peace and of social intercourse. In an epistle, dated from the court of Thoulouse, the orator satisfies the curiosity of one of his friends, in the following description : “ By the majesty of his
“ appearance, Theodoric would command the respect
“ of those who are ignorant of his merit : and al-
“ though he is born a prince, his merit would dignify
“ a private station. He is of a middle stature, his
“ body appears rather plump than fat, and in his well-
“ proportioned limbs agility is united with muscular
“ strength. If you examine his countenance, you
“ will distinguish a high forehead, large shaggy eye-
“ brows, an aquiline nose, thin lips, a regular set of
“ white teeth, and a fair complexion, that blushes
“ more frequently from modesty than from anger.
“ The ordinary distribution of his time, as far as it
“ is exposed to the public view, may be concisely re-
“ presented. Before day-break, he repairs, with a
“ small train, to his domestic chapel, where the ser-
“ vice is performed by the Arian clergy ; but those
“ who presume to interpret his secret sentiments
“ consider this assiduous devotion as the effect of
“ habit and policy. The rest of the morning is em-

“ployed in the administration of his kingdom. His
“chair is surrounded by some military officers of de-
“cent aspect and behaviour : the noisy crowd of his
“Barbarian guards occupies the hall of audience ;
“but they are not permitted to stand within the veils
“or curtains, that conceal the council-chamber from
“vulgar eyes. The ambassadors of the nations are
“successively introduced : Theodoric listens with at-
“tention, answers them with discreet brevity, and
“either announces or delays, according to the nature
“of their business, his final resolution. About eight
“(the second hour) he rises from his throne, and
“visits, either his treasury, or his stables. If he
“chooses to hunt, or at least to exercise himself on
“horseback, his bow is carried by a favourite youth ;
“but when the game is marked, he bends it with his
“own hand, and seldom misses the object of his aim :
“as a king, he disdains to bear arms in such ignoble
“warfare ; but as a soldier, he would blush to ac-
“cept any military service which he could perform
“himself. On common days, his dinner is not dif-
“ferent from the repast of a private citizen ; but
“every Saturday, many honourable guests are invited
“to the royal table, which, on these occasions, is
“served with the elegance of Greece, the plenty of
“Gaul, and the order and diligence of Italy. The
“gold or silver plate is less remarkable for its weight,
“than for the brightness and curious workmanship :
“the taste is gratified without the help of foreign
“and costly luxury ; the size and number of the
“cups of wine are regulated with a strict regard to
“the laws of temperance ; and the respectful silence
“that prevails is interrupted only by grave and in-
“structive conversation. After dinner, Theodoric
“sometimes indulges himself in a short slumber ; and
“as soon as he wakes, he calls for the dice and
“tables, encourages his friends to forget the royal

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“ majesty, and is delighted when they freely express
 “ the passions, which are excited by the incidents of
 “ play. At this game, which he loves as the image
 “ of war, he alternately displays his eagerness, his
 “ skill, his patience, and his cheerful temper. If he
 “ loses, he laughs; he is modest and silent, if he
 “ wins. Yet, notwithstanding this seeming indiffer-
 “ ence, his courtiers choose to solicit any favour in the
 “ moments of victory; and I myself, in my applica-
 “ tions to the king, have derived some benefit from
 “ my losses. About the ninth hour (three o’clock)
 “ the tide of business again returns, and flows in-
 “ cessantly till after sun-set, when the signal of the
 “ royal supper dismisses the weary crowd of suppliants
 “ and pleaders. At the supper, a more familiar re-
 “ past, buffoons and pantomimes are sometimes in-
 “ troduced, to divert, not to offend, the company,
 “ by their ridiculous wit: but female singers, and
 “ the soft effeminate modes of music, are severely
 “ banished, and such martial tunes as animate the
 “ soul to deeds of valour are alone grateful to the
 “ ear of Theodoric. He retires from table; and the
 “ nocturnal guards are immediately posted at the
 “ entrance of the treasury, the palace, and the pri-
 “ vate apartments.”

His expedi-
 tion into
 Spain,
 A. D. 456.

When the king of the Visigoths encouraged Avitus to assume the purple, he offered his person and his forces, as a faithful soldier of the republic. The exploits of Theodoric soon convinced the world that he had not degenerated from the warlike virtues of his ancestors. After the establishment of the Goths in Aquitain, and the passage of the Vandals into Africa, the Suevi, who had fixed their kingdom in Galicia, aspired to the conquest of Spain, and threatened to extinguish the feeble remains of the Roman dominion. The provincials of Carthagera and Tarragona, afflicted by a hostile invasion, re-

presented their injuries and their apprehensions. Count Fronto was despatched, in the name of the emperor Avitus, with advantageous offers of peace and alliance; and Theodoric interposed his weighty mediation, to declare that, unless his brother-in-law, the king of the Suevi, immediately retired, he should be obliged to arm in the cause of justice and of Rome. "Tell him," replied the haughty Rechiarius, "that I despise his friendship and his arms; but that I shall soon try whether he will dare to expect my arrival under the walls of Thoulouse." Such a challenge urged Theodoric to prevent the bold designs of his enemy: he passed the Pyrenees at the head of the Visigoths: the Franks and Burgundians served under his standard; and though he professed himself the dutiful servant of Avitus, he privately stipulated, for himself and his successors, the absolute possession of the Spanish conquests. The two armies, or rather the two nations, encountered each other on the banks of the river Urbicus, about twelve miles from Astorga; and the decisive victory of the Goths appeared for awhile to have extirpated the name and kingdom of the Suevi. From the field of battle Theodoric advanced to Braga, their metropolis, which still retained the splendid vestiges of its ancient commerce and dignity. His entrance was not polluted with blood, and the Goths respected the chastity of their female captives, more especially of the consecrated virgins: but the greatest part of the clergy and people were made slaves, and even the churches and altars were confounded in the universal pillage. The unfortunate king of the Suevi had escaped to one of the ports of the ocean; but the obstinacy of the winds opposed his flight; he was delivered to his implacable rival; and Rechiarius, who neither desired nor expected mercy, received with manly constancy the death which he would probably have inflicted.

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After this bloody sacrifice to policy or resentment, Theodoric carried his victorious arms as far as Merida, the principal town of Lusitania, without meeting any resistance; but he was stopped in the full career of success, and recalled from Spain, before he could provide for the security of his conquests. In his retreat towards the Pyrenees, he revenged his disappointment on the country through which he passed; and, in the sack of Polentia and Astorga, he showed himself a faithless ally, as well as a cruel enemy. Whilst the king of the Visigoths fought and vanquished in the name of Avitus, the reign of Avitus had expired; and both the honour and the interest of Theodoric were deeply wounded by the disgrace of a friend, whom he had seated on the throne of the Western empire.

Avitus is
deposed,
A. D. 456,
Oct. 16.

The pressing solicitations of the senate and people persuaded the emperor Avitus to fix his residence at Rome, and to accept the consulship for the ensuing year. On the first day of January, his son-in-law, Sidonius Apollinaris, celebrated his praises in a panegyric of six hundred verses; but this composition, though it was rewarded with a brass statue, seems to contain a very moderate proportion, either of genius or of truth. The poet, if we may degrade that sacred name, exaggerates the merit of a sovereign and a father; and his prophecy of a long and glorious reign was soon contradicted by the event. Avitus, at a time when the Imperial dignity was reduced to a pre-eminence of toil and danger, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italian luxury: age had not extinguished his amorous inclinations; and he is accused of insulting, with indiscreet and ungenerous raillery, the husbands whose wives he had seduced or violated. But the Romans were not inclined either to excuse his faults, or to acknowledge his virtues. The several parts of the empire became every day more alienated

from each other ; and the stranger of Gaul was the object of popular hatred and contempt. The senate asserted their legitimate claim in the election of an emperor ; and their authority, which had been originally derived from the old constitution, was again fortified by the actual weakness of a declining monarchy. Yet even such a monarchy might have resisted the votes of an unarmed senate, if their discontent had not been supported, or perhaps inflamed, by Count Ricimer, one of the principal commanders of the Barbarian troops, who formed the military defence of Italy. The daughter of Wallia, king of the Visigoths, was the mother of Ricimer ; but he was descended, on the father's side, from the nation of the Suevi : his pride, or patriotism, might be exasperated by the misfortunes of his countrymen ; and he obeyed, with reluctance, an emperor, in whose elevation he had not been consulted. His faithful and important services against the common enemy rendered him still more formidable ; and, after destroying, on the coast of Corsica, a fleet of Vandals, which consisted of sixty galleys, Ricimer returned in triumph with the appellation of the Deliverer of Italy. He chose that moment to signify to Avitus, that his reign was at an end ; and the feeble emperor, at a distance from his Gothic allies, was compelled, after a short and unavailing struggle, to abdicate the purple. By the clemency, however, or the contempt, of Ricimer, he was permitted to descend from the throne, to the more desirable station of bishop of Placentia : but the resentment of the senate was still unsatisfied ; and their inflexible severity pronounced the sentence of his death. He fled towards the Alps, with the humble hope, not of arming the Visigoths in his cause, but of securing his person and treasures in the sanctuary of Julian, one of the tutelar saints of Auvergne. Disease, or the hand of the executioner,

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arrested him on the road ; yet his remains were decently transported to Brivas, or Brioude, in his native province, and he reposed at the feet of his holy patron. Avitus left only one daughter, the wife of Sidonius Apollinaris, who inherited the patrimony of his father-in-law ; lamenting, at the same time, the disappointment of his public and private expectations. His resentment prompted him to join, or at least to countenance, the measures of a rebellious faction in Gaul ; and the poet had contracted some guilt, which it was incumbent on him to expiate, by a new tribute of flattery to the succeeding emperor.

Character
and elevation
of
Majorian,
A. D. 457.

The successor of Avitus presents the welcome discovery of a great and heroic character, such as sometimes arise in a degenerate age, to vindicate the honour of the human species. The emperor Majorian has deserved the praises of his contemporaries, and of posterity ; and these praises may be strongly expressed in the words of a judicious and disinterested historian : “ That he was gentle to his subjects ; that he was “ terrible to his enemies ; and that he excelled in “ *every* virtue, *all* his predecessors who had reigned “ over the Romans.” Such a testimony may justify at least the panegyric of Sidonius ; and we may acquiesce in the assurance, that, although the obsequious orator would have flattered, with equal zeal, the most worthless of princes, the extraordinary merit of his object confined him, on this occasion, within the bounds of truth. Majorian derived his name from his maternal grandfather, who, in the reign of the great Theodosius, had commanded the troops of the Illyrian frontier. He gave his daughter in marriage to the father of Majorian, a respectable officer, who administered the revenues of Gaul with skill and integrity ; and generously preferred the friendship of Ætius to the tempting offers of an insidious court. His son, the future emperor, who was educated in

the profession of arms, displayed, from his early youth, intrepid courage, premature wisdom, and unbounded liberality in a scanty fortune. He followed the standard of Ætius, contributed to his success, shared, and sometimes eclipsed his glory, and at last excited the jealousy of the patrician, or rather of his wife, who forced him to retire from the service. Majorian, after the death of Ætius, was recalled, and promoted; and his intimate connexion with count Ricimer was the immediate step by which he ascended the throne of the Western empire. During the vacancy that succeeded the abdication of Avitus, the ambitious Barbarian, whose birth excluded him from the Imperial dignity, governed Italy, with the title of Patrician; resigned, to his friend, the conspicuous station of master-general of the cavalry and infantry; and, after an interval of some months, consented to the unanimous wish of the Romans, whose favour Majorian had solicited by a recent victory over the Alemanni. He was invested with the purple at Ravenna; and the epistle which he addressed to the senate will best describe his situation and his sentiments. “Your election, Conscript Fathers! and the ordinance of the most valiant army, have made me your emperor. May the propitious Deity direct and prosper the counsels and events of my administration, to your advantage, and to the public welfare! For my own part, I did not aspire, I have submitted, to reign; nor should I have discharged the obligations of a citizen, if I had refused, with base and selfish ingratitude, to support the weight of those labours, which were imposed by the republic. Assist, therefore, the prince whom you have made; partake the duties which you have enjoined; and may our common endeavours promote the happiness of an empire, which I have accepted from your hands. Be assured, that, in our times, justice shall

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“ resume her ancient vigour, and that virtue shall
 “ become not only innocent but meritorious. Let
 “ none, except the authors themselves, be apprehensive of *delations*, which, as a subject, I have
 “ always condemned, and, as a prince, will severely
 “ punish. Our own vigilance, and that of our father,
 “ the patrician Ricimer, shall regulate all *military*
 “ affairs, and provide for the safety of the Roman
 “ world, which we have saved from foreign and domestic enemies. You now understand the maxims
 “ of my government : you may confide in the faithful
 “ love and sincere assurances of a prince, who has
 “ formerly been the companion of your life and
 “ dangers ; who still glories in the name of senator,
 “ and who is anxious, that you should never repent
 “ of the judgment which you have pronounced in his
 “ favour.” The emperor, who, amidst the ruins of
 the Roman world, revived the ancient language of
 law and liberty, which Trajan would not have dis-
 claimed, must have derived those generous senti-
 ments from his own heart ; since they were not sug-
 gested to his imitation by the customs of his age, or
 the example of his predecessors.

His salutary
laws,
A. D. 457
—461.

The private and public actions of Majorian are very
 imperfectly known : but his laws, remarkable for an
 original cast of thought and expression, faithfully re-
 present the character of a sovereign, who loved his
 people, who sympathized in their distress, who had
 studied the causes of the decline of the empire, and
 who was capable of applying (as far as such reforma-
 tion was practicable) judicious and effectual remedies
 to the public disorders. His regulations concerning
 the finances manifestly tended to remove, or at least
 to mitigate, the most intolerable grievances. I. From
 the first hour of his reign, he was solicitous (I trans-
 late his own words) to relieve the *weary* fortunes of
 the provincials, oppressed by the accumulated weight

of indictions and superindictions. With this view, he granted an universal amnesty, a final and absolute discharge of all arrears of tribute, of all debts, which, under any pretence, the fiscal officers might demand from the people. This wise dereliction of obsolete, vexatious, and unprofitable claims, improved and purified the sources of the public revenue; and the subject, who could now look back without despair, might labour with hope and gratitude for himself and for his country. II. In the assessment and collection of taxes, Majorian restored the ordinary jurisdiction of the provincial magistrates; and suppressed the extraordinary commissions which had been introduced, in the name of the emperor himself, or of the Prætorian præfects. The favourite servants, who obtained such irregular powers, were insolent in their behaviour, and arbitrary in their demands: they affected to despise the subordinate tribunals, and they were discontented, if their fees and profits did not twice exceed the sum which they condescended to pay into the treasury. One instance of their extortion would appear incredible, were it not authenticated by the legislator himself. They exacted the whole payment in gold: but they refused the current coin of the empire, and would accept only such ancient pieces as were stamped with the names of Faustina or the Antonines. The subject, who was unprovided with these curious medals, had recourse to the expedient of compounding with their rapacious demands; or if he succeeded in the research, his imposition was doubled, according to the weight and value of the money of former times. III. "The
"municipal corporations (says the emperor), the
"lesser senates (so antiquity has justly styled them),
"deserve to be considered as the heart of the cities,
"and the sinews of the republic. And yet so low
"are they now reduced, by the injustice of ma.

CHAP. "gistrates, and the venality of collectors, that many
 XXX. "of their members, renouncing their dignity and
 "their country, have taken refuge in distant and ob-
 "scure exile." He urges, and even compels, their
 return to their respective cities ; but he removes the
 grievance which had forced them to desert the exer-
 cise of their municipal functions. They are directed,
 under the authority of the provincial magistrates, to
 resume their office of levying the tribute ; but, in-
 stead of being made responsible for the whole sum
 assessed on their district, they are only required to
 produce a regular account of the payments which
 they have actually received, and of the defaulters who
 are still indebted to the public. IV. But Majorian
 was not ignorant that these corporate bodies were
 too much inclined to retaliate the injustice and op-
 pression which they had suffered ; and he therefore
 revives the useful office of the *defenders of cities*.
 He exhorts the people to elect, in a full and free
 assembly, some man of discretion and integrity, who
 would dare to assert their privileges, to represent their
 grievances, to protect the poor from the tyranny of the
 rich, and to inform the emperor of the abuses that
 were committed under the sanction of his name and
 authority.

The edifices
 of Rome.

The spectator, who casts a mournful view over the
 ruins of ancient Rome, is tempted to accuse the
 memory of the Goths and Vandals, for the mischief
 which they had neither leisure, nor power, nor per-
 haps inclination, to perpetrate. The tempest of war
 might strike some lofty turrets to the ground ; but
 the destruction which undermined the foundations
 of those massy fabrics was prosecuted, slowly and
 silently, during a period of ten centuries ; and the
 motives of interest, that afterwards operated without
 shame or control, were severely checked by the taste
 and spirit of the emperor Majorian. The decay of

the city had gradually impaired the value of the public works. The circus and theatres might still excite, but they seldom gratified, the desires of the people; the temples, which had escaped the zeal of the Christians, were no longer inhabited either by gods or men; the diminished crowds of the Romans were lost in the immense space of their baths and porticoes; and the stately libraries and halls of justice became useless to an indolent generation, whose repose was seldom disturbed, either by study or business. The monuments of consular, or Imperial, greatness were no longer revered, as the immortal glory of the capital; they were only esteemed as an inexhaustible mine of materials, cheaper, and more convenient, than the distant quarry. Specious petitions were continually addressed to the easy magistrates of Rome, which stated the want of stones or bricks for some necessary service: the fairest forms of architecture were rudely defaced for the sake of some paltry, or pretended, repairs; and the degenerate Romans, who converted the spoil to their own emolument, demolished, with sacrilegious hands, the labours of their ancestors. Majorian, who had often sighed over the desolation of the city, applied a severe remedy to the growing evil. He reserved to the prince and senate the sole cognizance of the extreme cases which might justify the destruction of an ancient edifice; imposed a fine of fifty pounds of gold (two thousand pounds sterling), on every magistrate who should presume to grant such illegal and scandalous licence; and threatened to chastise the criminal obedience of their subordinate officers, by a severe whipping, and the amputation of both their hands. In the last instance, the legislator might seem to forget the proportion of guilt and punishment; but his zeal arose from a generous principle, and Majorian was anxious to protect the monuments of those ages,

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in which he would have desired and deserved to live. The emperor conceived, that it was his interest to increase the number of his subjects; that it was his duty to guard the purity of the marriage-bed: but the means which he employed to accomplish these salutary purposes are of an ambiguous, and perhaps exceptionable, kind. The pious maids, who consecrated their virginity to Christ, were restrained from taking the veil, till they had reached their fortieth year. Widows under that age were compelled to form a second alliance within the term of five years, by the forfeiture of half their wealth to their nearest relations, or to the state. Unequal marriages were condemned or annulled. The punishment of confiscation and exile was deemed so inadequate to the guilt of adultery, that, if the criminal returned to Italy, he might, by the express declaration of Majorian, be slain with impunity.

Majorian
prepares
to invade
Africa,
A. D. 457.

While the emperor Majorian assiduously laboured to restore the happiness and virtue of the Romans, he encountered the arms of Genseric, from his character and situation, their most formidable enemy. A fleet of Vandals and Moors landed at the mouth of the Liris, or Garigliano: but the Imperial troops surprised and attacked the disorderly Barbarians, who were encumbered with the spoils of Campania; they were chased with slaughter to their ships, and their leader, the king's brother-in-law, was found in the number of the slain. Such vigilance might announce the character of the new reign; but the strictest vigilance, and the most numerous forces, were insufficient to protect the long-extended coast of Italy from the depredations of a naval war. The public opinion had imposed a nobler and more arduous task on the genius of Majorian. Rome expected from him alone the restitution of Africa; and the design which he formed, of attacking the Vandals in their

new settlements, was the result of bold and judicious policy. If the intrepid emperor could have infused his own spirit into the youth of Italy; if he could have revived, in the field of Mars, the manly exercises in which he had always surpassed his equals; he might have marched against Genseric at the head of a *Roman* army. Such a reformation of national manners might be embraced by the rising generation; but it is the misfortune of those princes who laboriously sustain a declining monarchy, that, to obtain some immediate advantage, or to avert some impending danger, they are forced to countenance, and even to multiply, the most pernicious abuses. Majorian, like the weakest of his predecessors, was reduced to the disgraceful expedient of substituting Barbarian auxiliaries in the place of his unwarlike subjects: and his superior abilities could only be displayed in the vigour and dexterity with which he wielded a dangerous instrument, so apt to recoil on the hand that used it. Besides the confederates, who were already engaged in the service of the empire, the fame of his liberality and valour attracted the nations of the Danube, the Borysthenes, and perhaps of the Tanais. Many thousands of the bravest subjects of Attila, the Gépidaë, the Ostrogoths, the Rugians, the Burgundians, the Suevi, the Alani, assembled in the plains of Liguria; and their formidable strength was balanced by their mutual animosities. They passed the Alps in a severe winter. The emperor led the way, on foot, and in complete armour; sounding, with his long staff, the depth of the ice, or snow, and encouraging the Scythians, who complained of the extreme cold, by the cheerful assurance, that they should be satisfied with the heat of Africa. The citizens of Lyons had presumed to shut their gates: they soon implored, and experienced, the clemency of Majorian. He vanquished

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Theodoric in the field ; and admitted to his friendship and alliance a king whom he had found not unworthy of his arms. The beneficial, though precarious, reunion of the greatest part of Gaul and Spain, was the effect of persuasion, as well as of force ; and the independent Bagaudæ, who had escaped, or resisted, the oppression of former reigns, were disposed to confide in the virtues of Majorian. His camp was filled with Barbarian allies ; his throne was supported by the zeal of an affectionate people ; but the emperor had foreseen, that it was impossible, without a maritime power, to achieve the conquest of Africa. In the first Punic war, the republic had exerted such incredible diligence, that, within sixty days after the first stroke of the axe had been given in the forest, a fleet of one hundred and sixty galleys proudly rode at anchor in the sea. Under circumstances much less favourable, Majorian equalled the spirit and perseverance of the ancient Romans. The woods of the Apennine were felled ; the arsenals and manufactures of Ravenna and Misenum were restored ; Italy and Gaul vied with each other in liberal contributions to the public service ; and the Imperial navy of three hundred large galleys, with an adequate proportion of transports and smaller vessels, was collected in the secure and capacious harbour of Carthage in Spain. The intrepid countenance of Majorian animated his troops with a confidence of victory ; and if we might credit the historian Procopius, his courage sometimes hurried him beyond the bounds of prudence. Anxious to explore, with his own eyes, the state of the Vandals, he ventured, after disguising the colour of his hair, to visit Carthage, in the character of his own ambassador : and Genseric was afterwards mortified by the discovery, that he had entertained and dismissed the emperor of the Romans. Such an anecdote may be rejected

as an improbable fiction ; but it is a fiction which would not have been imagined, unless in the life of a hero.

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Without the help of a personal interview, Genseric was sufficiently acquainted with the genius and designs of his adversary. He practised his customary arts of fraud and delay, but he practised them without success. His applications for peace became each hour more submissive, and perhaps more sincere ; but the inflexible Majorian had adopted the ancient maxim, that Rome could not be safe, as long as Carthage existed in a hostile state. The king of the Vandals distrusted the valour of his native subjects, who were enervated by the luxury of the South ; he suspected the fidelity of the vanquished people, who abhorred him as an Arian tyrant ; and the desperate measure, which he executed, of reducing Mauritania into a desert, could not defeat the operations of the Roman emperor, who was at liberty to land his troops on any part of the African coast. But Genseric was saved from impending and inevitable ruin, by the treachery of some powerful subjects ; envious, or apprehensive, of their master's success. Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Carthage : many of the ships were sunk, or taken, or burnt ; and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day. After this event, the behaviour of the two antagonists showed them superior to their fortune. The Vandal, instead of being elated by this accidental victory, immediately renewed his solicitations for peace. The emperor of the West, who was capable of forming great designs, and of supporting heavy disappointments, consented to a treaty, or rather to a suspension of arms ; in the full assurance that, before he could restore his navy, he should be supplied with provocations to justify a second war. Majorian re-

The loss of
his fleet.

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turned to Italy, to prosecute his labours for the public happiness ; and, as he was conscious of his own integrity, he might long remain ignorant of the dark conspiracy which threatened his throne and his life. The recent misfortune of Carthagera sullied the glory which had dazzled the eyes of the multitude : almost every description of civil and military officers were exasperated against the Reformer, since they all derived some advantage from the abuses which he endeavoured to suppress ; and the patrician Ricimer impelled the inconstant passions of the Barbarians against a prince whom he esteemed and hated. The virtues of Majorian could not protect him from the impetuous sedition, which broke out in the camp near Tortona, at the foot of the Alps. He was compelled to abdicate the Imperial purple : five days after his abdication, it was reported that he died of a dysentery ; and the humble tomb, which covered his remains, was consecrated by the respect and gratitude of succeeding generations. The private character of Majorian inspired love and respect. Malicious calumny and satire excited his indignation, or, if he himself were the object, his contempt : but he protected the freedom of wit, and in the hours which the emperor gave to the familiar society of his friends, he could indulge his taste for pleasantries, without degrading the majesty of his rank.

His death,
A. D. 461,
August 7.

Ricimer
reigns un-
der the
name of
Severus,
A. D. 461
—467.

It was not perhaps without some regret, that Ricimer sacrificed his friend to the interest of his ambition : but he resolved, in a second choice, to avoid the imprudent preference of superior virtue and merit. At his command, the obsequious senate of Rome bestowed the Imperial title on Libius Severus, who ascended the throne of the West without emerging from the obscurity of a private condition. History has scarcely deigned to notice his birth, his elevation, his character, or his death. Severus expired, as soon

as his life became inconvenient to his patron ; and it would be useless to discriminate his nominal reign in the vacant interval of six years, between the death of Majorian, and the elevation of Anthemius. During that period, the government was in the hands of Ricimer alone ; and although the modest Barbarian disclaimed the name of king, he accumulated treasures, formed a separate army, negotiated private alliances, and ruled Italy with the same independent and despotic authority, which was afterwards exercised by Odoacer and Theodoric. But his dominions were bounded by the Alps ; and two Roman generals, Marcellinus and Ægidius, maintained their allegiance to the republic, by rejecting, with disdain, the phantom which he styled an emperor. Marcellinus still adhered to the old religion ; and the devout Pagans, who secretly disobeyed the laws of the church and state, applauded his profound skill in the science of divination. But he possessed the more valuable qualifications of learning, virtue, and courage ; the study of the Latin literature had improved his taste ; and his military talents had recommended him to the esteem and confidence of the great Ætius, in whose ruin he was involved. By a timely flight, Marcellinus escaped the rage of Valentinian, and boldly asserted his liberty amidst the convulsions of the Western empire. His voluntary, or reluctant, submission, to the authority of Majorian, was rewarded by the government of Sicily, and the command of an army, stationed in that island to oppose, or to attack, the Vandals ; but his Barbarian mercenaries, after the emperor's death, were tempted to revolt by the artful liberality of Ricimer. At the head of a band of faithful followers, the intrepid Marcellinus occupied the province of Dalmatia, assumed the title of patrician of the West, secured the love of his subjects by a mild and equitable reign, built a fleet, which claimed

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Revolt of
Marcelli-
nus in
Dalmatia,

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XXX.and of
Ægidius
in Gaul.

the dominion of the Hadriatic, and alternately alarmed the coasts of Italy and of Africa. Ægidius, the master-general of Gaul, who equalled, or at least who imitated, the heroes of ancient Rome, proclaimed his immortal resentment against the assassins of his beloved master. A brave and numerous army was attached to his standard; and, though he ~~was~~ prevented by the arts of Ricimer, and the arms of the Visigoths, from marching to the gates of Rome, he maintained his independent sovereignty beyond the Alps, and rendered the name of Ægidius respectable both in peace and war. The Franks, who had punished with exile the youthful follies of Childeric, elected the Roman general for their king; his vanity, rather than his ambition, was gratified by that singular honour; and when the nation, at the end of four years, repented of the injury which they had offered to the Merovingian family, he patiently acquiesced in the restoration of the lawful prince. The authority of Ægidius ended only with his life; and the suspicions of poison and secret violence, which derived some countenance from the character of Ricimer, were eagerly entertained by the passionate credulity of the Gauls.

Naval war
of the Van-
dals,
A. D. 361
—467.

The kingdom of Italy, a name to which the Western empire was gradually reduced, was afflicted, under the reign of Ricimer, by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates*. In the spring of each year they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage; and Genseric himself, though in a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions. His designs were concealed with impenetrable secrecy, till the moment that he hoisted sail. When he was asked by his pilot,

* The naval war of Genseric is described by Priscus (*Excerpta Legation.* p. 42), Procopius (*de Bell. Vandal.* l. i. c. 5. p. 189, 190, and c. 22. p. 228), Victor Vitensis (*de Persecut. Vandal.* l. i. c. 17, and Ruinart, p. 467—481), and in the three panegyrics of Sidonius.

what course he should steer; "Leave the determination to the winds (replied the Barbarian, with pious arrogance); *they* will transport us to the guilty coast, whose inhabitants have provoked the divine justice:" but if Genseric himself deigned to issue more precise orders, he judged the most wealthy to be the most criminal. The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Bruttium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily: they were tempted to subdue the island of Sardinia, so advantageously placed in the centre of the Mediterranean; and their arms spread desolation, or terror, from the columns of Hercules to the mouth of the Nile. As they were more ambitious of spoil than of glory, they seldom attacked any fortified cities, or engaged any regular troops in the open field. But the celerity of their motions enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and to attack the most distant objects, which attracted their desires; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed, than they swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry. Yet, notwithstanding the example of their king, the native Vandals and Alani insensibly declined this toilsome and perilous warfare; the hardy generation of the first conquerors was almost extinguished, and their sons, who were born in Africa, enjoyed the delicious baths and gardens which had been acquired by the valour of their fathers. Their place was readily supplied by a various multitude of Moors and Romans, of captives and outlaws; and those desperate wretches, who had already violated the laws of their country, were the most eager to promote the atrocious acts which disgrace the victories of Genseric. In the treatment of his unhappy prisoners, he sometimes consulted his avarice, and sometimes indulged his cruelty; and the

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Negotia-
tions with
the Eastern
empire,
A. D. 462,
&c.

massacre of five hundred noble citizens of Zant or Zacynthus, whose mangled bodies he cast into the Ionian sea, was imputed, by the public indignation, to his latest posterity.

Such crimes could not be excused by any provocations ; but the war, which the king of the Vandals prosecuted against the Roman empire, was justified by a specious and reasonable motive. The widow of Valentinian, Eudoxia, whom he had led captive from Rome to Carthage, was the sole heiress of the Theodosian house ; her elder daughter, Eudocia, became the reluctant wife of Hunneric, his eldest son ; and the stern father, asserting a legal claim, which could not easily be refuted or satisfied, demanded a just proportion of the Imperial patrimony. An adequate, or at least a valuable, compensation was offered by the Eastern emperor, to purchase a necessary peace. Eudoxia and her younger daughter, Placidia, were honourably restored, and the fury of the Vandals was confined to the limits of the Western empire. The Italians, destitute of a naval force, which alone was capable of protecting their coasts, implored the aid of the more fortunate nations of the East ; who had formerly acknowledged, in peace and war, the supremacy of Rome. But the perpetual division of the two empires had alienated their interest and their inclinations ; the faith of a recent treaty was alleged ; and the Western Romans, instead of arms and ships, could only obtain the assistance of a cold and ineffectual mediation. The haughty Ricimer, who had long struggled with the difficulties of his situation, was at length reduced to address the throne of Constantinople, in the humble language of a subject ; and Italy submitted, as the price and security of the alliance, to accept a master from the choice of the emperor of the East. It is not the purpose of the present chapter, or even of the present volume, to

continue the distinct series of the Byzantine history ; but a concise view of the reign and character of the emperor Leo may explain the last efforts that were attempted to save the falling empire of the West *.

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Since the death of the younger Theodosius, the domestic repose of Constantinople had never been interrupted by war or faction. Pulcheria had bestowed her hand, and the sceptre of the East, on the modest virtue of Marcian : he gratefully revered her august rank and virgin chastity ; and, after her death, he gave his people the example of the religious worship, that was due to the memory of the Imperial saint †. Attentive to the prosperity of his own dominions, Marcian seemed to behold, with indifference, the misfortunes of Rome ; and the obstinate refusal of a brave and active prince to draw his sword against the Vandals was ascribed to a secret promise, which had formerly been exacted from him when he was a captive in the power of Genseric ‡. The death of Marcian, after a reign of seven years, would have exposed the East to the danger of a popular election ; if the superior weight of a single family had not been able to incline the balance in favour of the candidate whose interest they supported. The patrician Aspar might have placed the diadem on his own head, if he would have subscribed the Nicene creed. During three generations, the armies of the East were successively commanded by his father, by himself, and by his son Ardaburius : his Barbarian guards formed a military force that overawed the palace and the capital ; and the liberal distribution of his immense treasures rendered Aspar

Leo, emperor of the East,
A. D. 451
—474.

* The original authors of the reigns of Marcian, Leo, and Zeno, are reduced to some imperfect fragments, whose deficiencies must be supplied from the more recent compilations of Theophanes, Zonaras, and Cedrenus.

† St. Pulcheria died A. D. 453, four years before her nominal husband ; and her festival is celebrated on the 10th of September by the modern Greeks. See Tillemont, *Memoires Eccles.* tom. xv. p. 181—184.

‡ See Procopius de Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 4, p. 185.

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as popular as he was powerful. He recommended the obscure name of Leo of Thrace, a military tribune, and the principal steward of his household. His nomination was unanimously ratified by the senate; and the servant of Aspar received the Imperial crown from the hands of the patriarch or bishop. This emperor, the first of the name of Leo, ~~had~~ been distinguished by the title of the *Great*; from a succession of princes, who gradually fixed in the opinion of the Greeks a very humble standard of heroic, or at least of royal, perfection. Yet the temperate firmness with which Leo resisted the oppression of his benefactor showed that he was conscious of his duty and of his prerogative. Aspar was astonished to find that his influence could no longer appoint a præfect of Constantinople: he presumed to reproach his sovereign with a breach of promise, and insolently shaking his purple, "It is not proper (said he), that the man who is invested with this garment should be guilty of lying." "Nor is it proper (replied Leo), that a prince should be compelled to resign his own judgment, and the public interest, to the will of a subject." After this extraordinary scene, it was impossible that the reconciliation of the emperor and the patrician could be sincere; or, at least, that it could be solid and permanent. An army of Isaurians was secretly levied, and introduced into Constantinople; and while Leo undermined the authority, and prepared the disgrace, of the family of Aspar, his mild and cautious behaviour restrained them from any rash and desperate attempts, which might have been fatal to themselves, or their enemies. The measures of peace and war were affected by this internal revolution. As long as Aspar degraded the majesty of the throne, the secret correspondence of religion and interest engaged him to favour the cause of Genseric. When Leo had delivered himself from

that ignominious servitude, he listened to the complaints of the Italians; resolved to extirpate the tyranny of the Vandals; and declared his alliance with his colleague, Anthemius, whom he solemnly invested with the diadem and purple of the West.

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The virtues of Anthemius have perhaps been magnified, since the Imperial descent, which he could only deduce from the usurper Procopius, has been swelled into a line of emperors. But the merit of his immediate parents, their honours, and their riches, rendered Anthemius one of the most illustrious subjects of the East. His father Procopius obtained, after his Persian embassy, the rank of general and patrician; and the name of Anthemius was derived from his maternal grandfather, the celebrated præfect, who protected, with so much ability and success, the infant reign of Theodosius. The grandson of the præfect was raised above the condition of a private subject, by his marriage with Euphemia, the daughter of the emperor Marcian. This splendid alliance, which might supersede the necessity of merit, hastened the promotion of Anthemius to the successive dignities of count, of master-general, of consul, and of patrician; and his merit or fortune claimed the honours of a victory, which was obtained on the banks of the Danube, over the Huns. Without indulging an extravagant ambition, the son-in-law of Marcian might hope to be his successor; but Anthemius supported the disappointment with courage and patience; and his subsequent elevation was universally approved by the public, who esteemed him worthy to reign, till he ascended the throne. The emperor of the West marched from Constantinople, attended by several counts of high distinction, and a body of guards, almost equal to the strength and numbers of a regular army: he entered Rome in triumph, and the choice of Leo was confirmed by the senate, the

Anthemius,
emperor of
the West,
A. D. 467
—472.

A. D. 467,
April 12.

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people, and the Barbarian confederates of Italy. The solemn inauguration of Anthemius was followed by the nuptials of his daughter and the patrician Ricimer; a fortunate event, which was considered as the firmest security of the union and happiness of the state. The wealth of two empires was ostentatiously displayed; and many senators completed their ruin by an expensive effort to disguise their poverty. All serious business was suspended during this festival; the courts of justice were shut; the streets of Rome, the theatres, the places of public and private resort, resounded with hymeneal songs and dances; and the royal bride, clothed in silken robes, with a crown on her head, was conducted to the palace of Ricimer, who had changed his military dress for the habit of a consul and a senator. On this memorable occasion, Sidonius, whose early ambition had been so fatally blasted, appeared as the orator of Auvergne, among the provincial deputies who addressed the throne with congratulations or complaints. The calends of January were now approaching, and the venal poet, who had loved Avitus, and esteemed Majorian, was persuaded by his friends to celebrate, in heroic verse, the merit, the felicity, the second consulship, and the future triumphs of the emperor Anthemius. Sidonius pronounced, with assurance and success, a panegyric which is still extant; and whatever might be the imperfections, either of the subject or of the composition, the welcome flatterer was immediately rewarded with the præfecture of Rome; a dignity which placed him among the illustrious personages of the empire, till he wisely preferred the more respectable character of a bishop.

The festival
of the Lu-
percalia.

The Greeks ambitiously commend the piety and catholic faith of the emperor whom they gave to the West; nor do they forget to observe, that when he

left Constantinople, he converted his palace into the pious foundation of a public bath, a church, and an hospital for old men. Yet some suspicious appearances are found to sully the theological fame of Anthemius. From the conversation of Philotheus, a Macedonian sectary, he had imbibed the spirit of religious toleration; and the Heretics of Rome would have assembled with impunity, if the bold and vehement censure which pope Hilary pronounced in the church of St. Peter had not obliged him to abjure the unpopular indulgence. Even the Pagans, a feeble and obscure remnant, conceived some vain hopes from the indifference, or partiality, of Anthemius; and his singular friendship for the philosopher Severus, whom he promoted to the consulship, was ascribed to a secret project of reviving the ancient worship of the gods. These idols were crumbled into dust: and the mythology which had once been the creed of nations was so universally disbelieved, that it might be employed without scandal, or at least without suspicion, by Christian poets. Yet the vestiges of superstition were not absolutely obliterated, and the festival of the Lupercalia, whose origin had preceded the foundation of Rome, was still celebrated under the reign of Anthemius. The savage and simple rites were expressive of an early state of society before the invention of arts and agriculture. The rustic deities who presided over the toils and pleasures of the pastoral life, Pan, Faunus, and their train of satyrs, were such as the fancy of shepherds might create, sportive, petulant, and lascivious; whose power was limited, and whose malice was inoffensive. A goat was the offering the best adapted to their character and attributes; the flesh of the victim was roasted on willow spits; and the riotous youths, who crowded to the feast, ran naked about the fields, with leather thongs in their hands, communicating, as it

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was supposed, the blessing of fecundity to the women whom they touched. The altar of Pan was erected, perhaps by Evander the Arcadian, in a dark recess in the side of the Palatine-hill, watered by a perpetual fountain, and shaded by a hanging grove. A tradition, that, in the same place, Romulus and Remus were suckled by the wolf, rendered it still more sacred and venerable in the eyes of the Romans; and this sylvan spot was gradually surrounded by the stately edifices of the Forum. After the conversion of the Imperial city, the Christians still continued, in the month of February, the annual celebration of the Lupercalia; to which they ascribed a secret and mysterious influence on the genial powers of the animal and vegetable world. The bishops of Rome were solicitous to abolish a profane custom, so repugnant to the spirit of Christianity; but their zeal was not supported by the authority of the civil magistrate: the inveterate abuse subsisted till the end of the fifth century, and pope Gelasius, who purified the capital from the last stain of idolatry, appeased, by a formal apology, the murmurs of the senate and people.

Prepara-
tions against
the Vandals
of Africa,
A. D. 468.

In all his public declarations, the emperor Leo assumes the authority, and professes the affection, of a father, for his son Anthemius, with whom he had divided the administration of the universe. The situation, and perhaps the character, of Leo, dissuaded him from exposing his person to the toils and dangers of an African war. But the powers of the Eastern empire were strenuously exerted to deliver Italy and the Mediterranean from the Vandals; and Genseric, who had so long oppressed both the land and sea, was threatened from every side with a formidable invasion. The campaign was opened by a bold and successful enterprise of the præfect Heraclius. The troops of Egypt, Thebais, and Libya, were embarked under his command; and the Arabs,

with a train of horses and camels, opened the roads of the desert. Heraclius landed on the coast of Tripoli, surprised and subdued the cities of that province, and prepared by a laborious march, which Cato had formerly executed, to join the Imperial army under the walls of Carthage. The intelligence of this loss extorted from Genseric some insidious and ineffectual propositions of peace : but he was still more seriously alarmed by the reconciliation of Marcellinus with the two empires. The independent patrician had been persuaded to acknowledge the legitimate title of Anthemius, whom he accompanied in his journey to Rome ; the Dalmatian fleet was received into the harbours of Italy ; the active valour of Marcellinus expelled the Vandals from the island of Sardinia ; and the languid efforts of the West added some weight to the immense preparations of the Eastern Romans. The expense of the naval armament, which Leo sent against the Vandals, has been distinctly ascertained ; and the curious and instructive account displays the wealth of the declining empire. The royal demesnes, or private patrimony of the prince, supplied seventeen thousand pounds of gold ; forty-seven thousand pounds of gold, and seven hundred thousand of silver, were levied and paid into the treasury by the Prætorian præfects. But the cities were reduced to extreme poverty ; and the diligent calculation of fines and forfeitures, as a valuable object of the revenue, does not suggest the idea of a just, or merciful, administration. The whole expense, by whatsoever means it was defrayed, of the African campaign, amounted to the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds of gold, about five millions two hundred thousand pounds sterling, at a time when the value of money appears, from the comparative price of corn, to have been somewhat higher than in the present age. The fleet

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that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage consisted of eleven hundred and thirteen ships, and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded one hundred thousand men. Basiliscus, the brother of the empress Vorina, was intrusted with this important command. His sister, the wife of Leo, had exaggerated the merit of his former exploits against the Scythians. But the discovery of his guilt, or incapacity, was reserved for the African war; and his friends could only save his military reputation, by asserting, that he had conspired with Aspar to spare Genseric, and to betray the last hope of the Western empire.

Failure of
the expedi-
tion.

Experience has shown, that the success of an invader most commonly depends on the vigour and celerity of his operations. The strength and sharpness of the first impression are blunted by delay; the health and spirit of the troops insensibly languish in a distant climate; the naval and military force, a mighty effort which perhaps can never be repeated, is silently consumed; and every hour that is wasted in negotiation accustoms the enemy to contemplate and examine those hostile terrors, which, on their first appearance, he deemed irresistible. The formidable navy of Basiliscus pursued its prosperous navigation from the Thracian Bosphorus to the coast of Africa. He landed his troops at Cape Bona, or the promontory of Mercury, about forty miles from Carthage. The army of Heraclius, and the fleet of Marcellinus, either joined or seconded the Imperial lieutenant; and the Vandals, who opposed his progress by sea or land, were successively vanquished. If Basiliscus had seized the moment of consternation, and boldly advanced to the capital, Carthage must have surrendered, and the kingdom of the Vandals was extinguished. Genseric beheld the danger with firmness, and eluded it with his veteran dexterity.

He protested, in the most respectful language, that he was ready to submit his person, and his dominions, to the will of the emperor ; but he requested a truce of five days to regulate the terms of his submission ; and it was universally believed, that his secret liberality contributed to the success of this public negotiation. Instead of obstinately refusing whatever indulgence his enemy so earnestly solicited, the guilty, or the credulous, Basiliscus consented to the fatal truce ; and his imprudent security seemed to proclaim, that he already considered himself as the conqueror of Africa. During this short interval, the wind became favourable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals ; and they towed after them many large barks, filled with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night, these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by the sense of their instant danger. Their close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence ; and the noise of the wind, the crackling of the flames, the dissonant cries of the soldiers and mariners, who could neither command nor obey, increased the horror of the nocturnal tumult. Whilst they laboured to extricate themselves from the fire-ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valour ; and many of the Romans, who escaped the fury of the flames, were destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals. Among the events of that disastrous night, the heroic, or rather desperate, courage of John, one of the principal officers of Basiliscus, has rescued his name from oblivion. When the ship, which he had bravely defended, was almost consumed, he threw himself in

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his armour into the sea, disdainfully rejecting the esteem and pity of Genso, the son of Genseric, who pressed him to accept honourable quarter, and sunk under the waves, exclaiming, with his last breath, that he would never fall alive into the hands of those impious dogs. Actuated by a far different spirit, Basiliscus, whose station was the most remote from danger, disgracefully fled in the beginning of the engagement, returned to Constantinople with the loss of more than half of his fleet and army, and sheltered his guilty head in the sanctuary of St. Sophia, till his sister, by her tears and entreaties, could obtain his pardon from the indignant emperor. Heraclius effected his retreat through the desert; Marcellinus retired to Sicily, where he was assassinated, perhaps at the instigation of Ricimer, by one of his own captains; and the king of the Vandals expressed his surprise and satisfaction, that the Romans themselves should remove from the world his most formidable antagonists. After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric again became the tyrant of the sea; the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia, were again exposed to his revenge and avarice; Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and, before he died, in the fulness of years and of glory, he beheld the final extinction of the empire of the West*.

Conquests
of the Vi-
sigoths in
Spain and
Gaul.
A. D. 462
—472.

During his long and active reign, the African monarch had studiously cultivated the friendship of the Barbarians of Europe, whose arms he might employ in a seasonable and effectual diversion against the two empires. After the death of Attila, he re-

* For the African war, see Procopius (*de Bell. Vandal.* l. i. c. 6. p. 191, 192, 193), Theophanes (p. 99, 100, 101), Cedrenus (p. 349, 350), and Zonaras (tom. ii. l. xiv. p. 50, 51). Montesquieu (*Considerations sur la Grandeur, &c.* c. xx. tom. iii. p. 497), has made a judicious observation on the failure of these great naval armaments.

newed his alliance with the Visigoths of Gaul ; and the sons of the elder Theodoric, who successively reigned over that warlike nation, were easily persuaded, by the sense of interest, to forget the cruel affront which Genseric had inflicted on their sister*. The death of the emperor Majorian delivered Theodoric the second from the restraint of fear, and perhaps of honour ; he violated his recent treaty with the Romans ; and the ample territory of Narbonne, which he firmly united to his dominions, became the immediate reward of his perfidy. The selfish policy of Ricimer encouraged him to invade the provinces which were in the possession of Ægidius, his rival ; but the active count, by the defence of Arles, and the victory of Orleans, saved Gaul, and checked, during his lifetime, the progress of the Visigoths. Their ambition was soon rekindled ; and the design of extinguishing the Roman empire in Spain and Gaul was conceived, and almost completed, in the reign of Euric, who assassinated his brother Theodoric, and displayed, with a more savage temper, superior abilities, both in peace and war. He passed the Pyrenees at the head of a numerous army, subdued the cities of Saragossa and Pampeluna, vanquished in battle the martial nobles of the Tarraconese province, carried his victorious arms into the heart of Lusitania, and permitted the Suevi to hold the kingdom of Gallicia under the Gothic monarchy of Spain. The efforts of Euric were not less vigorous, or less successful in Gaul ; and throughout the country that extends from the Pyrenees to the Rhône and the Loire, Berry, and Auvergne, were the only cities,

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* Jornandes is our best guide through the reigns of Theodoric II., and Euric (*de Rebus Geticis*, c. 44, 45, 46, 47, p. 675—681). Idatius ends too soon, and Isidore is too sparing of the information which he might have given on the affairs of Spain. The events that relate to Gaul are laboriously illustrated in the third book of the Abbé Dubos, *Hist. Critique*, tom. i. p. 424—620.

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or dioceses, which refused to acknowledge him as their master. In the defence of Clermont, their principal town, the inhabitants of Auvergne sustained, with inflexible resolution, the miseries of war, pestilence, and famine; and the Visigoths, relinquishing the fruitless siege, suspended the hopes of that important conquest. The youth of the province were animated by the heroic, and almost incredible, valour of Ecdicius, the son of the emperor Avitus, who made a desperate sally with only eighteen horsemen, boldly attacked the Gothic army, and, after maintaining a flying skirmish, retired safe and victorious within the walls of Clermont. His charity was equal to his courage: in a time of extreme scarcity, four thousand poor were fed at his expense; and his private influence levied an army of Burgundians for the deliverance of Auvergne. From *his* virtues alone the faithful citizens of Gaul derived any hopes of safety or freedom; and even such virtues were insufficient to avert the impending ruin of their country, since they were anxious to learn from his authority and example, whether they should prefer the alternative of exile, or servitude. The public confidence was lost; the resources of the state were exhausted; and the Gauls had too much reason to believe, that Anthemius, who reigned in Italy, was incapable of protecting his distressed subjects beyond the Alps. The feeble emperor could only procure for their defence the service of twelve thousand British auxiliaries. Riothamus, one of the independent kings, or chieftains, of the island, was persuaded to transport his troops to the continent of Gaul; he sailed up the Loire, and established his quarters in Berry, where the people complained of these oppressive allies, till they were destroyed, or dispersed, by the arms of the Visigoths.

One of the last acts of jurisdiction, which the Roman senate exercised over their subjects of Gaul, was the trial and condemnation of Arvandus, the Prætorian præfect. Sidonius, who rejoices that he lived under a reign in which he might pity and assist a state criminal, has expressed with tenderness and freedom the faults of his indiscreet and unfortunate friend. From the perils which he had escaped, Arvandus imbibed confidence rather than wisdom; and such was the various, though uniform, imprudence of his behaviour, that his prosperity must appear much more surprising than his downfall. The second præfecture, which he obtained within the term of five years, abolished the merit and popularity of his preceding administration. His easy temper was corrupted by flattery, and exasperated by opposition; he was forced to satisfy his importunate creditors with the spoils of the province; his capricious insolence offended the nobles of Gaul, and he sunk under the weight of the public hatred. The mandate of his disgrace summoned him to justify his conduct before the senate; and he passed the sea of Tuscany with a favourable wind, the presage, as he vainly imagined, of his future fortunes. A decent respect was still observed for the *Præfectorian* rank; and on his arrival at Rome, Arvandus was committed to the hospitality, rather than to the custody, of Flavius Asellus, the count of the sacred largesses, who resided in the Capitol. He was eagerly pursued by his accusers, the four deputies of Gaul, who were all distinguished by their birth, their dignities, or their eloquence. In the name of a great province, and according to the forms of Roman jurisprudence, they instituted a civil and criminal action, requiring such a restitution as might compensate the losses of individuals, and such punishment as might satisfy

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Trial of
Arvandus,
A. D. 468.

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the justice of the state. Their charges of corrupt oppression were numerous and weighty ; but they placed their secret dependence on a letter, which they had intercepted, and which they could prove, by the evidence of his secretary, to have been dictated by Arvandus himself. The author of this letter seemed to dissuade the king of the Goths from a peace with the *Greek* emperor : he suggested the attack of the Britons on the Loire ; and he recommended a division of Gaul, according to the law of nations, between the Visigoths and the Burgundians. These pernicious schemes, which a friend could only palliate by the reproaches of vanity and indiscretion, were susceptible of a treasonable interpretation : and the deputies had artfully resolved, not to produce their most formidable weapons till the decisive moment of the contest. But their intentions were discovered by the zeal of Sidonius. He immediately apprised the unsuspecting criminal of his danger ; and sincerely lamented, without any mixture of anger, the haughty presumption of Arvandus, who rejected, and even resented, the salutary advice of his friends. Ignorant of his real situation, Arvandus showed himself in the Capitol in the white robe of a candidate, accepted indiscriminate salutations and offers of service, examined the shops of the merchants, the silks and gems, sometimes with the indifference of a spectator, and sometimes with the attention of a purchaser ; and complained of the times, of the senate, of the prince, and of the delays of justice. His complaints were soon removed. An early day was fixed for his trial ; and Arvandus appeared, with his accusers, before a numerous assembly of the Roman senate. The mournful garb which they affected excited the compassion of the judges, who were scandalized by the gay and splendid

dress of their adversary : and when the præfect Arvandus, with the first of the Gallic deputies, were directed to take their places on the senatorial benches, the same contrast of pride and modesty was observed in their behaviour. In this memorable judgment, which presented a lively image of the old republic, the Gauls exposed, with force and freedom, the grievances of the province ; and as soon as the minds of the audience were sufficiently inflamed, they recited the fatal epistle. The obstinacy of Arvandus was founded on the strange supposition, that a subject could not be convicted of treason, unless he had actually conspired to assume the purple. As the paper was read, he repeatedly, and with a loud voice, acknowledged it for his genuine composition ; and his astonishment was equal to his dismay, when the unanimous voice of the senate declared him guilty of a capital offence. By their decree, he was degraded from the rank of a præfect to the obscure condition of a plebeian, and ignominiously dragged by servile hands to the public prison. After a fortnight's adjournment, the senate was again convened to pronounce the sentence of his death : but while he expected, in the island of Æsculapius, the expiration of the thirty days allowed by an ancient law to the vilest malefactors, his friends interposed, the emperor Anthemius relented, and the præfect of Gaul obtained the milder punishment of exile and confiscation. The faults of Arvandus might deserve compassion ; but the impunity of Seronatus accused the justice of the republic, till he was condemned, and executed, on the complaint of the people of Auvergne. That flagitious minister, the Catiline of his age and country, held a secret correspondence with the Visigoths, to betray the province which he oppressed ; his industry was continually exercised in the disco-

CHAP. very of new taxes and obsolete offences ; and his
 XXX. extravagant vices would have inspired contempt, if
 they had not excited fear and abhorrence.

Discord of
 Anthemius
 and Ricimer,
 A. D. 471.

Such criminals were not beyond the reach of justice ; but whatever might be the guilt of Ricimer, that powerful Barbarian was able to contend or to negotiate with the prince, whose alliance he had condescended to accept. The peaceful and prosperous reign which Anthemius had promised to the West was soon clouded by misfortune and discord. Ricimer, apprehensive, or impatient, of a superior, retired from Rome, and fixed his residence at Milan ; an advantageous situation, either to invite, or to repel, the warlike tribes that were seated between the Alps and the Danube. Italy was gradually divided into two independent and hostile kingdoms ; and the nobles of Liguria, who trembled at the near approach of a civil war, fell prostrate at the feet of the patrician, and conjured him to spare their unhappy country. “ For my own part,” replied Ricimer, in a tone of insolent moderation, “ I am still inclined “ to embrace the friendship of the Galatian ; but “ who will undertake to appease his anger, or to “ mitigate the pride, which always rises in proportion to our submission ? ” They informed him, that Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, united the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove ; and appeared confident, that the eloquence of such an ambassador must prevail against the strongest opposition, either of interest or passion. Their recommendation was approved ; and Epiphanius, assuming the benevolent office of mediation, proceeded without delay to Rome, where he was received with the honours due to his merit and reputation. The oration of a bishop in favour of peace may be easily supposed ; he argued, that in all possible circumstances,

the forgiveness of injuries must be an act of mercy, or magnanimity, or prudence; and he seriously admonished the emperor to avoid a contest with a fierce Barbarian, which might be fatal to himself, and must be ruinous to his dominions. Anthemius acknowledged the truth of his maxims; but he deeply felt, with grief and indignation, the behaviour of Ricimer; and his passion gave eloquence and energy to his discourse. "What favours," he warmly exclaimed, "have we refused to this ungrateful man? What provocations have we not endured? Regardless of the majesty of the purple, I gave my daughter to a Goth; I sacrificed my own blood to the safety of the republic. The liberality which ought to have secured the eternal attachment of Ricimer has exasperated him against his benefactor. What wars has he not excited against the empire? How often has he instigated, and assisted the fury of hostile nations? Shall I now accept his perfidious friendship? Can I hope that *he* will respect the engagements of a treaty, who has already violated the duties of a son?" But the anger of Anthemius evaporated in these passionate exclamations: he insensibly yielded to the proposals of Epiphanius; and the bishop returned to his diocese with the satisfaction of restoring the peace of Italy, by a reconciliation, of which the sincerity and continuance might be reasonably suspected. The clemency of the emperor was extorted from his weakness; and Ricimer suspended his ambitious designs, till he had secretly prepared the engines with which he resolved to subvert the throne of Anthemius. The mask of peace and moderation was then thrown aside. The army of Ricimer was fortified by a numerous reinforcement of Burgundians and Oriental Suevi: he disclaimed all allegiance to the Greek emperor, marched from Milan to the gates of Rome, and fixing his

CHAP. camp on the banks of the Anio, impatiently expected
XXX. the arrival of Olybrius, his Imperial candidate.

Olybrius
emperor of
the West,
A. D. 472,
March 23.

The senator Olybrius, of the Anician family, might esteem himself the lawful heir of the Western empire. He had married Placidia, the younger daughter of Valentinian, after she was restored by Genseric; who still detained her sister Eudoxia, as the wife, or rather as the captive, of his son. The king of the Vandals supported, by threats and solicitations, the fair pretensions of his Roman ally; and assigned, as one of the motives of the war, the refusal of the senate and people to acknowledge their lawful prince, and the unworthy preference which they had given to a stranger. The friendship of the public enemy might render Olybrius still more unpopular to the Italians; but when Ricimer meditated the ruin of the emperor Anthemius, he tempted, with the offer of a diadem, the candidate who could justify his rebellion by an illustrious name, and a royal alliance. The husband of Placidia, who, like most of his ancestors, had been invested with the consular dignity, might have continued to enjoy a secure and splendid fortune in the peaceful residence of Constantinople; nor does he appear to have been tormented by such a genius, as cannot be amused or occupied, unless by the administration of an empire. Yet Olybrius yielded to the importunities of his friends, perhaps of his wife; rashly plunged into the dangers and calamities of a civil war; and, with the secret connivance of the emperor Leo, accepted the Italian purple, which was bestowed, and resumed, at the capricious will of a Barbarian. He landed without obstacle (for Genseric was master of the sea) either at Ravenna or the port of Ostia, and immediately proceeded to the camp of Ricimer, where he was received as the sovereign of the Western world.

Sack of
Rome, and

The patrician, who had extended his posts from

the Anio to the Milvian bridge, already possessed two quarters of Rome, the Vatican and the Janiculum, which are separated by the Tyber from the rest of the city; and it may be conjectured, that an assembly of seceding senators imitated, in the choice of Olybrius, the forms of a legal election. But the body of the senate and people firmly adhered to the cause of Anthemius; and the more effectual support of a Gothic army enabled him to prolong his reign, and the public distress, by a resistance of three months, which produced the concomitant evils of famine and pestilence. At length, Ricimer made a furious assault on the bridge of Hadrian, or St. Angelo; and the narrow pass was defended with equal valour by the Goths, till the death of Gilimer their leader. The victorious troops breaking down every barrier, rushed with irresistible violence into the heart of the city, and Rome (if we may use the language of a contemporary Pope) was subverted by the civil fury of Anthemius and Ricimer. The unfortunate Anthemius was dragged from his concealment, and inhumanly massacred by the command of his son-in-law; who thus added a third, or perhaps a fourth emperor to the number of his victims. The soldiers, who united the rage of factious citizens with the savage manners of Barbarians, were indulged, without control, in the licence of rapine and murder: the crowd of slaves and plebeians, who were unconcerned in the event, could only gain by the indiscriminate pillage; and the face of the city exhibited the strange contrast of stern cruelty, and dissolute intemperance. Forty days after this calamitous event, the subject, not of glory, but of guilt, Italy was delivered, by a painful disease, from the tyrant Ricimer, who bequeathed the command of his army to his nephew Gundobald, one of the princes of the Burgundians. In the same year, all the principal actors

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death of
Anthemius,
A. D. 472,
July 11.

Death of
Ricimer,
Aug. 20,

CHAP. in this great revolution were removed from the stage;
 XXX. and the whole reign of Olybrius, whose death does
 not betray any symptoms of violence, is included
 and of within the term of seven months. He left one
 Olybrius, daughter, the offspring of his marriage with Placidia ;
 Oct. 23. and the family of the great Theodosius, transplanted
 from Spain to Constantinople, was propagated in the
 female line as far as the eighth generation.

Julius Ne-
 pos and
 Glycerius,
 emperors of
 the West,
 A. D. 472
 —475.

Whilst the vacant throne of Italy was abandoned
 to lawless Barbarians*, the election of a new col-
 league was seriously agitated in the council of Leo.
 The empress Verina, studious to promote the great-
 ness of her own family, had married one of her
 nieces to Julius Nepos, who succeeded his uncle
 Marcellinus in the sovereignty of Dalmatia, a more
 solid possession than the title which he was per-
 suaded to accept, of Emperor of the West. But the
 measures of the Byzantine court were so languid and
 irresolute, that many months elapsed after the death
 of Anthemius, and even of Olybrius, before their
 destined successor could show himself, with a re-
 spectable force, to his Italian subjects. During that
 interval, Glycerius, an obscure soldier, was invested
 with the purple by his patron Gundobald ; but the
 Burgundian prince was unable, or unwilling, to sup-
 port his nomination by a civil war : the pursuits of
 domestic ambition recalled him beyond the Alps, and
 his client was permitted to exchange the Roman
 sceptre for the bishopric of Salona. After extin-
 guishing such a competitor, the emperor Nepos was
 acknowledged by the senate, by the Italians, and by
 the provincials of Gaul ; his moral virtues, and mili-
 tary talents, were loudly celebrated ; and those who
 derived any private benefit from his government

* The last revolutions of the Western empire are faintly marked in Theo-
 phanes (p. 102), Jornandes (c. 45, p. 679), the Chronicle of Marcellinus, and
 the fragments of an anonymous writer, published by Valesius at the end of Am-
 mianus (p. 716, 717).

announced, in prophetic strains, the restoration of the public felicity. Their hopes (if such hopes had been entertained) were confounded within the term of a single year; and the treaty of peace, which ceded Auvergne to the Visigoths, is the only event of his short and inglorious reign. The most faithful subjects of Gaul were sacrificed by the Italian emperor, to the hope of domestic security; but his repose was soon invaded by a furious sedition of the Barbarian confederates, who, under the command of Orestes, their general, were in full march from Rome to Ravenna. Nepos trembled at their approach; and instead of placing a just confidence in the strength of Ravenna, he hastily escaped to his ships, and retired to his Dalmatian principality, on the opposite coast of the Hadriatic. By this shameful abdication, he protracted his life about five years, in a very ambiguous state, between an emperor and an exile, till he was assassinated at Salona by the ungrateful Glycerius, who was translated, perhaps as the reward of his crime, to the archbishopric of Milan.

The nations who had asserted their independence after the death of Attila were established, by the right of possession or conquest, in the boundless countries to the north of the Danube; or in the Roman provinces between the river and the Alps. But the bravest of their youth inlisted in the army of *confederates*, who formed the defence and the terror of Italy; and in this promiscuous multitude, the names of the Heruli, the Scyrri, the Alani, the Turcilingi, and the Rugians, appear to have predominated. The example of these warriors was imitated by Orestes, the son of Tatullus, and the father of the last Roman emperor of the West. Orestes, who has been already mentioned in this history, had never deserted his country. His birth and fortunes rendered him one of the most illustrious subjects of Pannonia. When

The patri-
cian Orestes,
A. D. 475.

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that province was ceded to the Huns, he entered into the service of Attila, his lawful sovereign, obtained the office of his secretary, and was repeatedly sent ambassador to Constantinople, to represent the person, and signify the commands, of the imperious monarch. The death of that conqueror restored him to his freedom; and Orestes might honourably refuse either to follow the sons of Attila into the Scythian desert, or to obey the Ostrogoths, who had usurped the dominion of Pannonia. He preferred the service of the Italian princes, the successors of Valentinian; and, as he possessed the qualifications of courage, industry, and experience, he advanced with rapid steps in the military profession, till he was elevated, by the favour of Nepos himself, to the dignities of patrician, and master-general of the troops. These troops had been long accustomed to reverence the character and authority of Orestes, who affected their manners, conversed with them in their own language, and was intimately connected with their national chieftains, by long habits of familiarity and friendship. At his solicitation they rose in arms against the obscure Greek, who presumed to claim their obedience; and when Orestes, from some secret motive, declined the purple, they consented, with the same facility, to acknowledge his son Augustulus, as the emperor of the West. By the abdication of Nepos, Orestes had now attained the summit of his ambitious hopes; but he soon discovered, before the end of the first year, that the lessons of perjury and ingratitude, which a rebel must inculcate, will be retorted against himself; and that the precarious sovereign of Italy was only permitted to choose, whether he would be the slave, or the victim, of his Barbarian mercenaries. The dangerous alliance of these strangers had oppressed and insulted the last remains of Roman freedom and dignity. At each

His son Augustulus,
the last emperor of the
West,
A. D. 476.

revolution, their pay and privileges were augmented ; but their insolence increased in a still more extravagant degree ; they envied the fortune of their brethren in Gaul, Spain, and Africa, whose victorious arms had acquired an independent and perpetual inheritance ; and they insisted on their peremptory demand, that a *third* part of the lands of Italy should be immediately divided among them. Orestes, with a spirit which, in another situation, might be entitled to our esteem, chose rather to encounter the rage of an armed multitude, than to subscribe the ruin of an innocent people. He rejected the audacious demand ; and his refusal was favourable to the ambition of Odoacer ; a bold Barbarian, who assured his fellow soldiers, that, if they dared to associate under his command, they might soon extort the justice which had been denied to their dutiful petitions. From all the camps and garrisons of Italy, the confederates, actuated by the same resentment and the same hopes, impatiently flocked to the standard of this popular leader ; and the unfortunate patrician, overwhelmed by the torrent, hastily retreated to the strong city of Pavia, the episcopal seat of the holy Epiphanius. Pavia was immediately besieged, the fortifications were stormed, the town was pillaged ; and although the bishop might labour, with much zeal and some success, to save the property of the church, and the chastity of female captives, the tumult could only be appeased by the execution of Orestes. His brother Paul was slain in an action near Ravenna ; and the helpless Augustulus, who could no longer command the respect, was reduced to implore the clemency, of Odoacer.

That successful Barbarian was the son of Edecon ; Odoacer, who, in some remarkable transactions, particularly ^{king of Italy,} described in a preceding chapter, had been the colleague of Orestes himself. The honour of an am-
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—490.

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bassador should be exempt from suspicion ; and Edecon had listened to a conspiracy against the life of his sovereign. But this apparent guilt was expiated by his merit or repentance : his rank was eminent and conspicuous ; he enjoyed the favour of Attila ; and the troops under his command, who guarded in their turn the royal village, consisted in a tribe of a Scyrrî, his immediate and hereditary subjects. In the revolt of the nations, they still adhered to the Huns ; and, more than twelve years afterwards, the name of Edecon is honourably mentioned, in their unequal contest with the Ostrogoths ; which was terminated, after two bloody battles, by the defeat and dispersion of the Scyrrî*. Their gallant leader, who did not survive this national calamity, left two sons, Onulf and Odoacer, to struggle with adversity, and to maintain as they might, by rapine or service, the faithful followers of their exile. Onulf directed his steps towards Constantinople, where he sullied, by the assassination of a generous benefactor, the fame which he had acquired in arms. His brother Odoacer led a wandering life among the Barbarians of Noricum, with a mind and a fortune suited to the most desperate adventures ; and when he had fixed his choice, he piously visited the cell of Severinus, the popular saint of the country, to solicit his approbation and blessing. The lowness of the door would not admit the lofty stature of Odoacer : he was obliged to stoop ; but in that humble attitude the saint could discern the symptoms of his future greatness ; and addressing him in a prophetic tone, " Pursue" (said he) " your design ; proceed to Italy ; you will soon cast away this " coarse garment of skins ; and your wealth will be

* Jornandes, c. 53, 54, p. 692—695. M. de Buat (*Hist. des Peuples de l'Europe*, tom. viii. p. 221—228), has clearly explained the origin and adventures of Odoacer. I am almost inclined to believe that he was the same who pillaged Angers, and commanded a fleet of Saxon pirates on the ocean. Greg. Turon. l. ii. c. 18. in tom. ii. p. 170.

“adequate to the liberality of your mind.” The Barbarian, whose daring spirit accepted and ratified the prediction, was admitted into the service of the Western empire, and soon obtained an honourable rank in the guards. His manners were gradually polished; his military skill was improved, and the confederates of Italy would not have elected him for their general, unless the exploits of Odoacer had established a high opinion of his courage and capacity. Their military acclamations saluted him with the title of king: but he abstained, during his whole reign, from the use of the purple and diadem, lest he should offend those princes, whose subjects, by their accidental mixture, had formed the victorious army which time and policy might insensibly unite into a great nation.

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Royalty was familiar to the Barbarians, and the submissive people of Italy was prepared to obey, without a murmur, the authority which he should condescend to exercise as the vicegerent of the emperor of the West. But Odoacer had resolved to abolish that useless and expensive office; and such is the weight of antique prejudice, that it required some boldness and penetration to discover the extreme facility of the enterprise. The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still affected the spirit of freedom, and the forms of the constitution. An epistle was addressed, by their unanimous decree, to the emperor Zeno, the son-in-law and successor of Leo; who had lately been restored, after a short rebellion, to the Byzantine throne. They solemnly “disclaim the necessity, or even the wish, of continuing any longer the Imperial succession in Italy; since, in their opinion, the majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to per-

Extinction
of the
Western
empire,
A. D. 476,
or A. D.
479.

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“ vade and protect, at the same time, both the East
“ and the West. In their own name, and in the
“ name of the people, they consent that the seat of
“ universal empire shall be transferred from Rome
“ to Constantinople ; and they basely renounce the
“ right of choosing their master, the only vestige that
“ yet remained of the authority which had given
“ laws to the world. The republic (they repeat that
“ name without a blush) might safely confide in the
“ civil and military virtues of Odoacer ; and they
“ humbly request, that the emperor would invest him
“ with the title of Patrician, and the administration
“ of the *diocese* of Italy.” The deputies of the
senate were received at Constantinople with some
marks of displeasure and indignation ; and when they
were admitted to the audience of Zeno, he sternly
reproached them with their treatment of the two em-
perors, Anthemius and Nepos, whom the East had
successively granted to the prayers of Italy. “ The
“ first” (continued he) “ you have murdered ; the
“ second you have expelled : but the second is still
“ alive, and whilst he lives he is your lawful sove-
“ reign.” But the prudent Zeno soon deserted the
hopeless cause of his abdicated colleague. His vanity
was gratified by the title of sole emperor, and by the
statues erected to his honour in the several quarters
of Rome ; he entertained a friendly, though am-
biguous, correspondence with the *patrician* Odoacer ;
and he gratefully accepted the Imperial ensigns, the
sacred ornaments of the throne and palace, which the
Barbarian was not unwilling to remove from the
sight of the people*.

Augustulus
is banished
to the Lu-
cullan villa.

In the space of twenty years since the death of
Valentinian, nine emperors had successively dis-

* Malchus, whose loss excites our regret, has preserved (in *Excerpt. Legat.* p. 93), this extraordinary embassy from the senate to Zeno. The anonymous fragment (p. 717), and the extract from Candidus (*apud Phot.* p. 176), are likewise of some use.

appeared; and the son of Orestes, a youth recommended only by his beauty, would be the least entitled to the notice of posterity, if his reign, which was marked by the extinction of the Roman empire in the West, did not leave a memorable æra in the history of mankind*. The patrician Orestes had married the daughter of Count *Romulus*, of Petovio in Noricum: the name of *Augustus*, notwithstanding the jealousy of power, was known at Aquileia as a familiar surname; and the appellations of the two great founders of the city, and of the monarchy, were thus strangely united in the last of their successors. The son of Orestes assumed and disgraced the names of *Romulus Augustus*; but the first was corrupted into *Momyllus*, by the Greeks, and the second has been changed by the Latins into the contemptible diminutive *Augustulus*. The life of this inoffensive youth was spared by the generous clemency of *Odoacer*; who dismissed him, with his whole family, from the Imperial palace, fixed his annual allowance at six thousand pieces of gold, and assigned the castle of *Lucullus*, in Campania, for the place of his exile or retirement†. As soon as the Romans breathed from the toils of the Punic war, they were attracted by the beauties and the pleasures of Campania; and the country-house of the elder *Scipio*, at *Liternum*, exhibited a lasting model of their rustic simplicity. The delicious shores of the bay of *Naples* were crowded with villas; and *Sylla* applauded the masterly skill

* The precise year in which the Western empire was extinguished is not positively ascertained. The vulgar æra of A. D. 476 *appears* to have the sanction of authentic chronicles. But the two dates assigned by *Jornandes* (c. 46. p. 680), would delay that great event to the year 479: and though *M. de Buat* has overlooked *his* evidence, he produces (tom. viii. p. 261—288) many collateral circumstances in support of the same opinion.

† *Ingređiens autem Ravennam deposuit Augustulum de regno, cujus infantiam misertus concessit ei sanguinem; et quia pulcher erat, tamen donavit ei redditum sex millia solidos, et misit eum intra Campaniam cum parentibus suis libere vivere.* *Anonym. Vales.* p. 716. *Jornandes* says (c. 46. p. 680), in *Lucullano Campaniæ castello exilii pœna damnavit.*

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of his rival, who had seated himself on the lofty promontory of Misenum, that commands, on every side, the sea and land, as far as the boundaries of the horizon. The villa of Marius was purchased, within a few years, by Lucullus, and the price had increased from two thousand five hundred, to more than four-score thousand, pounds sterling. It was adorned by the new proprietor with Grecian arts, and Asiatic treasures; and the houses and gardens of Lucullus obtained a distinguished rank in the list of Imperial palaces. When the Vandals became formidable to the sea-coast, the Lucullan villa, on the promontory of Misenum, gradually assumed the strength and appellation of a strong castle, the obscure retreat of the last emperor of the West. About twenty years after that great revolution, it was converted into a church and monastery, to receive the bones of St. Severinus. They securely reposed, amidst the broken trophies of Cimbric and Armenian victories, till the beginning of the tenth century; when the fortifications, which might afford a dangerous shelter to the Saracens, were demolished by the people of Naples.

Decay of
the Roman
spirit.

Odoacer was the first Barbarian who reigned in Italy, over a people who had once asserted their just superiority above the rest of mankind. The disgrace of the Romans still excites our respectful compassion, and we fondly sympathise with the imaginary grief and indignation of their degenerate posterity. But the calamities of Italy had gradually subdued the proud consciousness of freedom and glory. In the age of Roman virtue, the provinces were subject to the arms, and the citizens to the laws, of the republic; till those laws were subverted by civil discord, and both the city and the provinces became the servile property of a tyrant. The forms of the constitution, which alleviated or disguised their abject slavery, were abolished by time and violence; the Italians

alternately lamented the presence or the absence of the sovereigns, whom they detested or despised ; and the succession of five centuries inflicted the various evils of military licence, capricious despotism, and elaborate oppression. During the same period, the Barbarians had emerged from obscurity and contempt, and the warriors of Germany and Scythia were introduced into the provinces, as the servants, the allies, and at length the masters, of the Romans, whom they insulted or protected. The hatred of the people was suppressed by fear ; they respected the spirit and splendour of the martial chiefs who were invested with the honours of the empire ; and the fate of Rome had long depended on the sword of those formidable strangers. The stern Ricimer, who trampled on the ruins of Italy, had exercised the power, without assuming the title, of a king ; and the patient Romans were insensibly prepared to acknowledge the royalty of Odoacer and his Barbaric successors.

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The King of Italy was not unworthy of the high station to which his valour and fortune had exalted him ; his savage manners were polished by the habits of conversation ; and he respected, though a conqueror and a Barbarian, the institutions, and even the prejudices, of his subjects. After an interval of seven years, Odoacer restored the consulship of the West. For himself, he modestly, or proudly, declined an honour which was still accepted by the emperors of the East ; but the curule chair was successively filled by eleven of the most illustrious senators ; and the list is adorned by the respectable name of Basilius, whose virtues claimed the friendship and grateful applause of Sidonius, his client. The laws of the emperors were strictly enforced, and the civil administration of Italy was still exercised by the Prætorian præfect, and his subordinate officers.

Character
and reign of
Odoacer,
A. D. 476
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Odoacer devolved on the Roman magistrates the odious and oppressive task of collecting the public revenue; but he reserved for himself the merit of seasonable and popular indulgence. Like the rest of the Barbarians, he had been instructed in the Arian heresy; but he revered the monastic and episcopal characters; and the silence of the Catholics attests the toleration which they enjoyed. The peace of the city required the interposition of his præfect Basilius in the choice of a Roman pontiff: the decree which restrained the clergy from alienating their lands was ultimately designed for the benefit of the people, whose devotion would have been taxed to repair the dilapidations of the church. Italy was protected by the arms of its conqueror; and its frontiers were respected by the Barbarians of Gaul and Germany, who had so long insulted the feeble race of Theodosius. Odoacer passed the Hadriatic, to chastise the assassins of the emperor Nepos, and to acquire the maritime province of Dalmatia. He passed the Alps, to rescue the remains of Noricum from Fava, or Feletheus, king of the Rugians, who held his residence beyond the Danube. The king was vanquished in battle, and led away prisoner; a numerous colony of captives and subjects was transplanted into Italy; and Rome, after a long period of defeat and disgrace, might claim the triumph of her Barbarian master.

Miserable
state of
Italy.

Notwithstanding the prudence and success of Odoacer, his kingdom exhibited the sad prospect of misery and desolation. Since the age of Tiberius, the decay of agriculture had been felt in Italy; and it was a just subject of complaint that the life of the Roman people depended on the accidents of the winds and waves. In the division and decline of the empire, the tributary harvests of Egypt and Africa were withdrawn; the numbers of the inhabitants continually diminished

with the means of subsistence ; and the country was exhausted by the irretrievable losses of war, famine, and pestilence. St. Ambrose has deplored the ruin of a populous district, which had been once adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Regium, and Placentia. Pope Gelasius was a subject of Odoacer, and he affirms, with strong exaggeration, that in *Æmilia*, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, the human species was almost extirpated. The plebeians of Rome, who were fed by the hand of their master, perished or disappeared, as soon as his liberality was suppressed ; the decline of the arts reduced the industrious mechanic to idleness and want ; and the senators, who might support with patience the ruin of their country, bewailed their private loss of wealth and luxury. One-third of those ample estates, to which the ruin of Italy is originally imputed, was extorted for the use of the conquerors. Injuries were aggravated by insults ; the sense of actual sufferings was embittered by the fear of more dreadful evils ; and as new lands were allotted to new swarms of Barbarians, each senator was apprehensive lest the arbitrary surveyors should approach his favourite villa, or his most profitable farm. The least unfortunâte were those who submitted without a murmur to the power which it was impossible to resist. Since they desired to live, they owed some gratitude to the tyrant who had spared their lives ; and since he was the absolute master of their fortunes, the portion which he left must be accepted as his pure and voluntary gift. The distress of Italy was mitigated by the prudence and humanity of Odoacer, who had bound himself, at the price of his elevation, to satisfy the demands of a licentious and turbulent multitude. The kings of the Barbarians were frequently resisted, deposed, or murdered, by their *native* subjects ; and the various bands of Italian mercenaries, who as-

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sociated under the standard of an elective general, claimed a larger privilege of freedom and rapine. A monarchy destitute of national union, and hereditary right, hastened to its dissolution. After a reign of fourteen years, Odoacer was oppressed by the superior genius of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, a hero alike excellent in the arts of war and of government, who restored an age of peace and prosperity, and whose name still excites and deserves the attention of mankind.

NOTE. In the original publication the narrative is here interrupted by the 37th chapter, which contains a minute account of the origin, progress, and effects, of the monastic life; with various examples of the wild absurdities to which it gave occasion in Egypt, and in other countries. The same chapter contains a very long dissertation on the introduction and the suppression of the Arian heresy among the Barbarians. The historical narrative is resumed in the 38th chapter, with which Mr. Gibbon finished his work, in the year 1781.—In the present publication, the 37th chapter of the original is entirely omitted, and the history is continued without any interruption.

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CHAP. XXXI.

State of Gaul, and Establishment of the French Monarchy by Clovis.—State of Spain under the Dominion of the Visigoths.—State of Britain, and Establishment of the Saxon Heptarchy.—General Reflections on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West.

THE Gauls, who impatiently supported the Roman yoke, received a memorable lesson from one of the lieutenants of Vespasian, whose weighty sense has been refined and expressed by the genius of Tacitus. “The protection of the republic has delivered
“Gaul from internal discord and foreign invasions.
“By the loss of national independence, you have acquired the name and privileges of Roman citizens.
“You enjoy, in common with ourselves, the permanent benefits of civil government; and your remote
“situation is less exposed to the accidental mischiefs
“of tyranny. Instead of exercising the rights of
“conquest, we have been contented to impose such
“tributes as are requisite for your own preservation.
“Peace cannot be secured without armies; and
“armies must be supported at the expense of the
“people. It is for your sake, not for our own, that
“we guard the barrier of the Rhine against the ferocious Germans, who have so often attempted,
“and who will always desire, to exchange the solitude of their woods and morasses for the wealth
“and fertility of Gaul. The fall of Rome would be
“fatal to the provinces; and you would be buried
“in the ruins of that mighty fabric, which has been
“raised by the valour and wisdom of eight hundred
“years. Your imaginary freedom would be insulted

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The revolution of Gaul.

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“ and oppressed by a savage master ; and the expulsion of the Romans would be succeeded by the eternal hostilities of the Barbarian conquerors.”

This salutary advice was accepted, and this strange prediction was accomplished. In the space of four hundred years, the hardy Gauls, who had encountered the arms of Cæsar, were imperceptibly melted into the general mass of citizens and subjects : the Western empire was dissolved ; and the Germans, who had passed the Rhine, fiercely contended for the possession of Gaul, and excited the contempt, or abhorrence, of its peaceful and polished inhabitants. With that conscious pride which the pre-eminence of knowledge and luxury seldom fails to inspire, they derided the hairy and gigantic savages of the North ; their rustic manners, dissonant joy, voracious appetite, and their horrid appearance, equally disgusting to the sight and to the smell. The liberal studies were still cultivated in the schools of Autun and Bordeaux ; and the language of Cicero and Virgil was familiar to the Gallic youth. Their ears were astonished by the harsh and unknown sounds of the Germanic dialect, and they ingeniously lamented that the trembling muses fled from the harmony of a Burgundian lyre. The Gauls were endowed with all the advantages of art and nature ; but as they wanted courage to defend them, they were justly condemned to obey, and even to flatter, the victorious Barbarians, by whose clemency they held their precarious fortunes and their lives.

Euric, king
of the Visi-
goths,
A. D. 476
—485.

As soon as Odoacer had extinguished the Western empire, he sought the friendship of the most powerful of the Barbarians. The new sovereign of Italy resigned to Euric, king of the Visigoths, all the Roman conquests beyond the Alps, as far as the Rhine and the Ocean : and the senate might confirm this liberal gift with some ostentation of power, and with-

out any real loss of revenue or dominion. The lawful pretensions of Euric were justified by ambition and success; and the Gothic nation might aspire, under his command, to the monarchy of Spain and Gaul. Arles and Marseilles surrendered to his arms; he oppressed the freedom of Auvergne; and the bishop condescended to purchase his recall from exile by a tribute of just, but reluctant, praise. Sidonius waited before the gates of the palace among a crowd of ambassadors and suppliants; and their various business at the court of Bordeaux attested the power, and the renown, of the king of the Visigoths. The Heruli of the distant ocean, who painted their naked bodies with its cærulean colour, implored his protection; and the Saxons respected the maritime provinces of a prince, who was destitute of any naval force. The tall Burgundians submitted to his authority; nor did he restore the captive Franks, till he had imposed on that fierce nation the terms of an unequal peace. The Vandals of Africa cultivated his useful friendship; and the Ostrogoths of Pannonia were supported by his powerful aid against the oppression of the neighbouring Huns. The North (such are the lofty strains of the poet) was agitated, or appeased, by the nod of Euric; the great king of Persia consulted the oracle of the West; and the aged god of the Tyber was protected by the swelling genius of the Garonne*. The fortune of nations has often depended on accidents; and France may ascribe her greatness to the premature death of the Gothic king, at a time when his son Alaric was an helpless infant, and his adversary Clovis† an ambitious and valiant youth.

* Sidonius, l. viii. epist. 3. 9, in tom. i. p. 800. Jornandes (*de Rebus Geticis*, c. 47, p. 680) justifies, in some measure, this portrait of the Gothic hero.

† I use the familiar appellation of *Clovis*, from the Latin *Chlodovechus*, or *Chlodoveus*. But the *Ch* expresses only the German aspiration; and the true

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Clovis, king
of the
Franks,
A. D. 481
—512.

While Childeric, the father of Clovis, lived an exile in Germany, he was hospitably entertained by the queen, as well as by the king, of the Thuringians. After his restoration, Basina escaped from her husband's bed to the arms of her lover. Clovis was the offspring of this voluntary union ; and, when he was no more than fifteen years of age, he succeeded, by his father's death, to the command of the Salian tribe. The narrow limits of his kingdom were confined to the island of the Batavians, with the ancient dioceses of Tournay and Arras ; and at the baptism of Clovis, the number of his warriors could not exceed five thousand. The kindred tribes of the Franks, who had seated themselves along the Belgic rivers, the Scheld, the Meuse, the Moselle, and the Rhine, were governed by their independent kings, of the Merovingian race ; the equals, the allies, and sometimes the enemies, of the Salic prince. But the Germans, who obeyed, in peace, the hereditary jurisdiction of their chiefs, were free to follow the standard of a popular and victorious general ; and the superior merit of Clovis attracted the respect and allegiance of the national confederacy. When he first took the field, he had neither gold and silver in his coffers, nor wine and corn in his magazines : but he imitated the example of Cæsar, who, in the same country, had acquired wealth by the sword, and purchased soldiers with the fruits of conquest. After each successful battle, or expedition, the spoils were accumulated in one common mass ; every warrior received his proportionable share, and the royal prerogative submitted to the equal regulations of military law. The untamed spirit of the Barbarians was taught to acknowledge the advantages of regular discipline. At the annual review of the month of

name is not different from *Luduin*, or *Lewis* (Mem. de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xx. p. 68).

March, their arms were diligently inspected ; and when they traversed a peaceful territory, they were prohibited from touching a blade of grass. The justice of Clovis was inexorable ; and his careless or disobedient soldiers were punished with instant death. It would be superfluous to praise the valour of a Frank : but the valour of Clovis was directed by cool and consummate prudence. In all his transactions with mankind, he calculated the weight of interest, of passion, and of opinion ; and his measures were sometimes adapted to the sanguinary manners of the Germans, and sometimes moderated by the milder genius of Rome, and Christianity. He was intercepted in the career of victory, since he died in the forty-fifth year of his age : but he had already accomplished, in a reign of thirty years, the establishment of the French monarchy in Gaul.

The Visigoths had resigned to Clovis the greatest part of their Gallic possessions ; but their loss was amply compensated by the easy conquest, and secure enjoyment, of the provinces of Spain. From the monarchy of the Goths, which soon involved the Suevic kingdom of Galicia, the modern Spaniards still derive some national vanity : but the historian of the Roman Empire is neither invited, nor compelled, to pursue the obscure and barren series of their annals*. The Goths of Spain were separated from the rest of mankind, by the lofty ridge of the Pyrenæan mountains : their manners and institutions, as far as they were common to the Germanic tribes, have been already explained ; and it only remains to observe some interesting circumstances, which relate to the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the Spanish kingdom.

* Spain, in these dark ages, has been peculiarly unfortunate. The Franks had a Gregory of Tours ; the Saxons, or Angles, a Bede ; the Lombards, a Paul Warnefrid, &c. But the history of the Visigoths is contained in the short and imperfect chronicles of Isidore of Seville, and John of Biclar.

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Legislative
assemblies
of Spain.

The bishops of Spain respected themselves, and were respected by the public: their indissoluble union disguised their vices, and confirmed their authority: and the regular discipline of the church introduced peace, order, and stability, into the government of the state. From the reign of Recared, the first Catholic king, to that of Witiza, the immediate predecessor of the unfortunate Roderic, sixteen national councils were successively convened. The six metropolitans, Toledo, Seville, Merida, Braga, Tarragona, and Narbonne, presided according to their respective seniority; the assembly was composed of their suffragan bishops, who appeared in person, or by their proxies; and a place was assigned to the most holy or opulent of the Spanish abbots. During the first three days of the convocation, as long as they agitated the ecclesiastical questions of doctrine and discipline, the profane laity was excluded from their debates; which were conducted, however, with decent solemnity. But on the morning of the fourth day, the doors were thrown open for the entrance of the great officers of the palace, the dukes and counts of the provinces, the judges of the cities, and the Gothic nobles: and the decrees of Heaven were ratified by the consent of the people. The same rules were observed in the provincial assemblies, the annual synods which were empowered to hear complaints, and to redress grievances; and a legal government was supported by the prevailing influence of the Spanish clergy. The national councils of Toledo, in which the free spirit of the Barbarians was tempered and guided by episcopal policy, have established some prudent laws for the common benefit of the king and people. The vacancy of the throne was supplied by the choice of the bishops and palatines; and, after the failure of the line of Alaric, the regal dignity was still limited to the pure and

noble blood of the Goths. The clergy, who anointed their lawful prince, always recommended the duty of allegiance: and the spiritual censures were denounced on the heads of the impious subjects, who should resist his authority, conspire against his life, or violate, by an indecent union, the chastity even of his widow. But the monarch himself, when he ascended the throne, was bound by a reciprocal oath to God and his people, that he would faithfully execute his important trust. The real or imaginary faults of his administration were subject to the control of a powerful aristocracy; and the bishops and palatines were guarded by a fundamental privilege, that they should not be degraded, imprisoned, tortured, nor punished with death, exile, or confiscation, unless by the free and public judgment of their peers*.

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One of these legislative councils of Toledo examined and ratified the code of laws which had been compiled by a succession of Gothic kings, from the fierce Euric, to the devout Egica. As long as the Visigoths themselves were satisfied with the rude customs of their ancestors, they indulged their subjects of Aquitain and Spain in the enjoyment of the Roman law. Their gradual improvement in arts, in policy, and at length in religion, encouraged them to imitate, and to supersede, these foreign institutions; and to compose a code of civil and criminal jurisprudence, for the use of a great and united people. The same obligations, and the same privileges, were communicated to the nations of the Spanish monarchy: and the conquerors, insensibly

Code of the
Visigoths.

* The acts of the councils of Toledo are still the most authentic records of the church and constitution of Spain. The following passages are particularly important (iii. 17, 18. iv. 75. v. 2, 3, 4, 5. 8. vi. 11, 12, 13, 14. 17, 18. vii. 1. xiii. 2, 3, 6). I have found Mascou (*Hist. of the ancient Germans*, xv. 29, and *Annotations*, xxvi. and xxxiii.) and Ferreras (*Hist. Generale de l'Espagne*, tom. ii.) very useful and accurate guides.

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renouncing the Teutonic idiom, submitted to the restraints of equity, and exalted the Romans to the participation of freedom. The merit of this impartial policy was enhanced by the situation of Spain, under the reign of the Visigoths. The Provincials were long separated from their Arian masters by the irreconcilable difference of religion. After the conversion of Recared had removed the prejudices of the Catholics, the coasts, both of the Ocean and Mediterranean, were still possessed by the Eastern Emperors; who secretly excited a discontented people to reject the yoke of the Barbarians, and to assert the name and dignity of Roman citizens. The allegiance of doubtful subjects is indeed most effectually secured by their own persuasion, that they hazard more in a revolt, than they can hope to obtain by a revolution; but it has appeared so natural to oppress those whom we hate and fear, that the contrary system well deserves the praise of wisdom and moderation*.

Revolution
of Britain.

While the kingdoms of the Franks and Visigoths were established in Gaul and Spain, the Saxons achieved the conquest of Britain, the third great diocese of the Præfecture of the West. Since Britain was already separated from the Roman empire, I might, without reproach, decline a story, familiar to the most illiterate, and obscure to the most learned, of my readers. The Saxons, who excelled in the use of the oar, or the battle-axe, were ignorant of the art which could alone perpetuate the fame of their exploits: the provincials, relapsing into barbarism, neglected to describe the ruin of their country; and the doubtful tradition was almost extinguished, before the missionaries of Rome restored the light of science and Christianity. The declama-

* The Code of the Visigoths, regularly divided into twelve books, has been correctly published by Dom Bouquet (in tom. iv. p. 273—460).

tions of Gildas, the fragments, or fables, of Nennius, the obscure hints of the Saxon laws and chronicles, and the ecclesiastical tales of the venerable Bede*, have been illustrated by the diligence, and sometimes embellished by the fancy, of succeeding writers, whose works I am not ambitious either to censure or to transcribe†. Yet the historian of the empire may be tempted to pursue the revolutions of a Roman province, till it vanishes from his sight; and an Englishman may curiously trace the establishment of the Barbarians, from whom he derives his name, his laws, and perhaps his origin.

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About forty years after the dissolution of the Roman government, Vortigern appears to have obtained the supreme, though precarious, command of the princes and cities of Britain. That unfortunate monarch has been almost unanimously condemned for the weak and mischievous policy of inviting a formidable stranger, to repel the vexatious inroads of a domestic foe. His ambassadors are despatched, by the gravest historians, to the coast of Germany; they address a pathetic oration to the general assembly of the Saxons, and those warlike Barbarians resolve to assist with a fleet and army the suppliants of a distant and unknown island. If Britain had indeed been unknown to the Saxons, the measure of its calamities would have been less complete. But the strength of the Roman government could not always guard the maritime province against the pirates of Germany: the independent and divided states

Descent of
the Saxons,
A. D. 449.

* See Gildas de Excidio Britanniae, c. 11—25, p. 4—9. edit. Gale. Nennius Hist. Britonum, c. 28. 35—65, p. 105—115. edit. Gale. Bede Hist. Ecclesiast. Gentis Anglorum, l. i. c. 12—16, p. 49—53, c. 22, p. 58. edit. Smith. Chron. Saxonum, p. 11—23, &c. edit. Gibson. The Anglo-Saxon laws were published by Wilkins, London, 1731, in folio; and the Leges Wallicæ, by Wotton and Clarke, London, 1730, in folio.

† The laborious Mr. Carte, and the ingenious Mr. Whitaker, are the two modern writers to whom I am principally indebted. The particular historian of Manchester embraces, under that obscure title, a subject almost as extensive as the general History of England.

were exposed to their attacks ; and the Saxons might sometimes join the Scots and the Picts, in a tacit, or express, confederacy of rapine and destruction. Vortigern could only balance the various perils, which assaulted on every side his throne and his people ; and his policy may deserve either praise or excuse, if he preferred the alliance of *those* Barbarians, whose naval power rendered them the most dangerous enemies, and the most serviceable allies. Hengist and Horsa, as they ranged along the Eastern coast with three ships, were engaged, by the promise of an ample stipend, to embrace the defence of Britain ; and their intrepid valour soon delivered the country from the Caledonian invaders. The isle of Thanet, a secure and fertile district, was allotted for the residence of these German auxiliaries, and they were supplied, according to the treaty, with a plentiful allowance of clothing and provisions. This favourable reception encouraged five thousand warriors to embark with their families in seventeen vessels, and the infant power of Hengist was fortified by this strong and seasonable reinforcement. The crafty Barbarian suggested to Vortigern the obvious advantage of fixing, in the neighbourhood of the Picts, a colony of faithful allies : a third fleet of forty ships, under the command of his son and nephew, sailed from Germany, ravaged the Orkneys, and disembarked a new army on the coast of Northumberland, or Lothian, at the opposite extremity of the devoted land. It was easy to foresee, but it was impossible to prevent, the impending evils. The two nations were soon divided and exasperated by mutual jealousies. The Saxons magnified all that they had done and suffered in the cause of an ungrateful people ; while the Britons regretted the liberal rewards which could not satisfy the avarice of those haughty mercenaries. The causes of fear and hatred were inflamed into an

irreconcilable quarrel. The Saxons flew to arms ; and, if they perpetrated a treacherous massacre, during the security of a feast, they destroyed the reciprocal confidence which sustains the intercourse of peace and war.

Hengist, who boldly aspired to the conquest of Britain, exhorted his countrymen to embrace the glorious opportunity : he painted in lively colours the fertility of the soil, the wealth of the cities, the pusillanimous temper of the natives, and the convenient situation of a spacious solitary island, accessible on all sides to the Saxon fleets. The successive colonies which issued, in the period of a century, from the mouths of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine, were principally composed of three valiant tribes or nations of Germany ; the *Jutes*, the *old Saxons*, and the *Angles*. The Jutes, who fought under the peculiar banner of Hengist, assumed the merit of leading their countrymen in the paths of glory, and of erecting, in Kent, the first independent kingdom. The fame of the enterprise was attributed to the primitive Saxons ; and the common laws and language of the conquerors are described by the national appellation of a people, which, at the end of four hundred years, produced the first monarchs of South Britain. The Angles were distinguished by their numbers and their success ; and they claimed the honour of fixing a perpetual name on the country, of which they occupied the most ample portion. The Barbarians, who followed the hopes of rapine either on the land or sea, were insensibly blended with this triple confederacy ; the *Frisians*, who had been tempted by their vicinity to the British shores, might balance, during a short space, the strength and reputation of the native Saxons ; the *Danes*, the *Prussians*, the *Rugians* are faintly described ; and some adventurous *Huns*, who had wandered as

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Establish-
ment of
the Saxon
heptarchy,
A. D. 455
—582.

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far as the Baltic, might embark on board the German vessels, for the conquest of a new world. But this arduous achievement was not prepared or executed by the union of national powers. Each intrepid chieftain, according to the measure of his fame and fortunes, assembled his followers; equipped a fleet of three, or perhaps of sixty, vessels; chose the place of the attack; and conducted his subsequent operations according to the events of the war, and the dictates of his private interest. In the invasion of Britain many heroes vanquished and fell; but only seven victorious leaders assumed, or at least maintained, the title of kings. Seven independent thrones, the Saxon Heptarchy, were founded by the conquerors, and seven families, one of which has been continued, by female succession, to our present sovereign, derived their equal and sacred lineage from Woden, the god of war. It has been pretended, that this republic of kings was moderated by a general council and a supreme magistrate: but such an artificial scheme of policy is repugnant to the rude and turbulent spirit of the Saxons: their laws are silent; and their imperfect annals afford only a dark and bloody prospect of intestine discord.

State of the
Britons.

A monk, who, in the profound ignorance of human life, has presumed to exercise the office of historian, strangely disfigures the state of Britain at the time of its separation from the Western empire. Gildas describes in florid language the improvements of agriculture, the foreign trade which flowed with every tide into the Thames and the Severn, the solid and lofty construction of public and private edifices: he accuses the sinful luxury of the British people; of a people, according to the same writer, ignorant of the most simple arts, and incapable, without the aid of the Romans, of providing walls of stone, or weapons of iron, for the defence of their native land.

Under the long dominion of the emperors, Britain had been insensibly moulded into the elegant and servile form of a Roman province, whose safety was intrusted to a foreign power. The subjects of Honorius contemplated their new freedom with surprise and terror; they were left destitute of any civil or military constitution; and their uncertain rulers wanted either skill, or courage, or authority, to direct the public force against the common enemy. The introduction of the Saxons betrayed their internal weakness, and degraded the character both of the prince and people. Their consternation magnified the danger; the want of union diminished their resources; and the madness of civil factions was more solicitous to accuse, than to remedy, the evils, which they imputed to the misconduct of their adversaries. Yet the Britons were not ignorant, they could not be ignorant, of the manufacture or the use of arms: the successive and disorderly attacks of the Saxons allowed them to recover from their amazement, and the prosperous or adverse events of the war added discipline and experience to their native valour.

While the continent of Europe and Africa yielded, without resistance, to the Barbarians, the British island, alone and unaided, maintained a long, a vigorous, though an unsuccessful struggle, against the formidable pirates, who, almost at the same instant, assaulted the northern, the eastern, and the southern coasts. The cities which had been fortified with skill, were defended with resolution; the advantages of ground, hills, forests, and morasses, were diligently improved by the inhabitants; the conquest of each district was purchased with blood; and the defeats of the Saxons are strongly attested by the discreet silence of their annalist. Hengist might hope to achieve the conquest of Britain; but his ambition,

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in an active reign of thirty-five years, was confined to the possession of Kent ; and the numerous colony which he had planted in the North was extirpated by the sword of the Britons. The monarchy of the West-Saxons was laboriously founded by the persevering efforts of three martial generations. The life of Cerdic, one of the bravest of the children of Woden, was consumed in the conquest of Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight ; and the loss which he sustained in the battle of Mount Badon reduced him to a state of inglorious repose. Kenric, his valiant son, advanced into Wiltshire ; besieged Salisbury, at that time seated on a commanding eminence ; and vanquished an army which advanced to the relief of the city. In the subsequent battle of Marlborough *, his British enemies displayed their military science. Their troops were formed in three lines ; each line consisted of three distinct bodies ; and the cavalry, the archers, and the pikemen, were distributed according to the principles of Roman tactics. The Saxons charged in one weighty column, boldly encountered with their short swords the long lances of the Britons, and maintained an equal conflict till the approach of night. Two decisive victories, the death of three British kings, and the reduction of Cirencester, Bath, and Gloucester, established the fame and power of Ceaulin, the grandson of Cerdic, who carried his victorious arms to the banks of the Severn.

and flight.

After a war of a hundred years, the independent Britons still occupied the whole extent of the Western coast, from the wall of Antoninus to the extreme

* At Beran-birig, or Barbury-castle, near Marlborough. The Saxon chronicle assigns the name and date. Camden (*Britannia*, vol. i. p. 128) ascertains the place ; and Henry of Huntingdon (*Scriptores post Bedam*, p. 314) relates the circumstances of this battle. They are probable and characteristic ; and the historians of the twelfth century might consult some materials that no longer exist.

promontory of Cornwall; and the principal cities of the inland country still opposed the arms of the Barbarians. Resistance became more languid, as the number and boldness of the assailants continually increased. Winning their way by slow and painful efforts, the Saxons, the Angles, and their various confederates, advanced from the North, from the East, and from the South, till their victorious banners were united in the centre of the island. Beyond the Severn the Britons still asserted their national freedom, which survived the heptarchy, and even the monarchy, of the Saxons. The bravest warriors, who preferred exile to slavery, found a secure refuge in the mountains of Wales: the reluctant submission of Cornwall was delayed for some ages; and a band of fugitives acquired a settlement in Gaul, by their own valour, or the liberality of the Merovingian kings. The Western angle of Armorica acquired the new appellations of *Cornwall* and the *Lesser Britain*; and the vacant lands of the Osismii were filled by a strange people, who, under the authority of their counts and bishops, preserved the laws and language of their ancestors. To the feeble descendants of Clovis and Charlemagne, the Britons of Armorica refused the customary tribute, subdued the neighbouring dioceses of Vannes, Rennes, and Nantes, and formed a powerful, though vassal, state, which has been united to the crown of France.

In a century of perpetual, or at least implacable, war, much courage, and some skill, must have been exerted for the defence of Britain. Yet if the memory of its champions is almost buried in oblivion, we need not repine; since every age, however destitute of science or virtue, sufficiently abounds with acts of blood and military renown. The tomb of Vortimer, the son of Vortigern, was erected on the margin of the sea-shore, as a landmark formidable to

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the Saxons, whom he had thrice vanquished in the fields of Kent. Ambrosius Aurelianus was descended from a noble family of Romans, his modesty was equal to his valour, and his valour, till the last fatal action, was crowned with splendid success. But every British name is effaced by the illustrious name of ARTHUR*, the hereditary prince of the Silures, in South Wales, and the elective king or general of the nation. According to the most rational account, he defeated, in twelve successive battles, the Angles of the North, and the Saxons of the West; but the declining age of the hero was embittered by popular ingratitude, and domestic misfortunes. The events of his life are less interesting than the singular revolutions of his fame. During a period of five hundred years the tradition of his exploits was preserved, and rudely embellished, by the obscure bards of Wales and Armorica, who were odious to the Saxons, and unknown to the rest of mankind. The pride and curiosity of the Norman conquerors prompted them to inquire into the ancient history of Britain: they listened with fond credulity to the tale of Arthur, and eagerly applauded the merit of a prince, who had triumphed over the Saxons, their common enemies. His romance, transcribed in the Latin of Jeffrey of Monmouth, and afterwards translated into the fashionable idiom of the times, was enriched with the various, though incoherent, ornaments, which were familiar to the experience, the learning, or the fancy, of the twelfth century. The progress of a Phrygian colony, from the Tyber to the Thames, was easily engrafted on the fable of the Æneid; and the royal ancestors of Arthur derived their origin from Troy,

* As I am a stranger to the Welsh bards Myrdhin, Llomarch, and Taliessin, my faith in the existence and exploits of Arthur principally rests on the simple and circumstantial testimony of Nennius (*Hist. Brit.* c. 62, 63, p. 114). Mr. Whitaker (*Hist. of Manchester*, vol. ii. p. 31—71), has framed an interesting, and even probable, narrative of the wars of Arthur: though it is impossible to allow the reality of the round table.

and claimed their alliance with the Cæsars. His trophies were decorated with captive provinces, and Imperial titles; and his Danish victories avenged the recent injuries of his country. The gallantry and superstition of the British hero, his feasts and tournaments, and the memorable institution of his Knights of the *Round Table*, were faithfully copied from the reigning manners of chivalry; and the fabulous exploits of Uther's son appear less incredible, than the adventures which were achieved by the enterprising valour of the Normans. Pilgrimage, and the holy wars, introduced into Europe the specious miracles of Arabian magic. Fairies, and giants, flying dragons, and enchanted palaces, were blended with the more simple fictions of the West; and the fate of Britain depended on the art, or the predictions, of Merlin. Every nation embraced and adorned the popular romance of Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table: their names were celebrated in Greece and Italy; and the voluminous tales of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram were devoutly studied by the princes and nobles, who disregarded the genuine heroes and historians of antiquity. At length the light of science and reason was rekindled; the talisman was broken; the visionary fabric melted into air; and by a natural, though unjust, reverse of the public opinion, the severity of the present age is inclined to question the *existence* of Arthur*.

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Resistance, if it cannot avert, must increase the miseries of conquest; and conquest has never appeared more dreadful and destructive than in the hands of the Saxons; who hated the valour of their enemies, disdained the faith of treaties, and violated,

Desolation
of Britain.

* The progress of romance, and the state of learning, in the middle ages, are illustrated by Mr. Thomas Wharton, with the taste of a poet, and the minute diligence of an antiquarian. I have derived much instruction from the two learned dissertations prefixed to the first volume of his *History of English Poetry*.

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without remorse, the most sacred objects of the Christian worship. The fields of battle might be traced, almost in every district, by monuments of bones; the fragments of falling towers were stained with blood; the last of the Britons, without distinction of age or sex, was massacred * in the ruins of Anderida †; and the repetition of such calamities was frequent and familiar under the Saxon heptarchy. The arts and religion, the laws and language, which the Romans had so carefully planted in Britain, were extirpated by their barbarous successors. After the destruction of the principal churches, the bishops, who had declined the crown of martyrdom, retired with the holy relics into Wales and Armorica; the remains of their flocks were left destitute of any spiritual food; and the practice, and even the remembrance, of Christianity were abolished. The kings of France maintained the privileges of their Roman subjects; but the ferocious Saxons trampled on the laws of Rome, and of the emperors. The proceedings of civil and criminal jurisdiction, the titles of honour, the forms of office, the ranks of society, and even the domestic rights of marriage, testament, and inheritance, were finally suppressed; and the indiscriminate crowd of noble and plebeian slaves was governed by the traditionary customs, which had been coarsely framed for the shepherds and pirates of Germany. The language of science, of business, and of conversation, which had been introduced by the Romans, was lost in the general desolation. A sufficient number of Latin or Celtic words might be assumed by the Germans, to express

* Hoc anno (490) Ælla et Cissa obsederunt Andredes-Ceaster; et interfecerunt omnes qui id incoluerunt; adeo ut ne unus Brito ibi superstes fuerit (Chron. Saxon. p. 15).

† Andredes-Ceaster, or Anderida, is placed by Camden (Britannia, vol. i. p. 258), at Newenden, in the marshy grounds of Kent, which might be formerly covered by the sea, and on the edge of the great forest (Anderida), which overspread so large a portion of Hampshire and Sussex.

their new wants and ideas ; but those *illiterate* Pagans preserved and established the use of their national dialect. Almost every name, conspicuous either in the church or state, reveals its Teutonic origin ; and the geography of *England* was universally inscribed with foreign characters and appellations. The example of a revolution, so rapid and so complete, may not easily be found ; but it will excite a probable suspicion, that the arts of Rome were less deeply rooted in Britain than in Gaul or Spain ; and that the native rudeness of the country and its inhabitants was covered by a thin varnish of Italian manners.

This strange alteration has persuaded historians, Servitude. and even philosophers, that the provincials of Britain were totally exterminated ; and that the vacant land was again peopled by the perpetual influx, and rapid increase, of the German colonies. Three hundred thousand Saxons are *said* to have obeyed the summons of Hengist ; the entire emigration of the Angles was attested, in the age of Bede, by the solitude of their native country ; and our experience has shown the free propagation of the human race, if they are cast on a fruitful wilderness, where their steps are unconfined, and their subsistence is plentiful. The Saxon kingdoms displayed the face of recent discovery and cultivation : the towns were small, the villages were distant ; the husbandry was languid and unskilful ; four sheep were equivalent to an acre of the best land* ; an ample space of wood and morass was resigned to the vague dominion of nature ; and the modern bishopric of Durham, the whole territory from the Tyne to the Tees, had returned to its primitive state of a savage and solitary forest†.

* See Dr. Henry's useful and laborious History of Great Britain, vol. ii. p. 388.

† Quicquid (says John of Tinemouth) inter Tynam et Tesam fluvios extitit sola eremi vastitudo tunc temporis fuit, et idcirco nullius ditioni servivit, eo quod

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Such imperfect population might have been supplied, in some generations, by the English colonies; but neither reason nor facts can justify the unnatural supposition, that the Saxons of Britain remained alone in the desert which they had subdued. After the sanguinary Barbarians had secured their dominion, and gratified their revenge, it was their interest to preserve the peasants, as well as the cattle, of the unresisting country. In each successive revolution, the patient herd becomes the property of its new masters; and the salutary compact of food and labour is silently ratified by their mutual necessities. Wilfrid, the apostle of Sussex*, accepted from his royal convert the gift of the peninsula of Selsey, near Chichester, with the persons and property of its inhabitants, who then amounted to eighty-seven families. He released them at once from spiritual and temporal bondage; and two hundred and fifty slaves of both sexes were baptized by their indulgent master. The kingdom of Sussex, which spread from the sea to the Thames, contained seven thousand families; twelve hundred were ascribed to the Isle of Wight; and, if we multiply this vague computation, it may seem probable, that England was cultivated by a million of servants, or *villains*, who were attached to the estates of their arbitrary landlords. The indigent Barbarians were often tempted to sell their children or themselves into perpetual, and even foreign, bondage†; yet the special exemptions, which were granted to *national* slaves‡, sufficiently declare, that they

sola indomitorum et sylvestrium animalium spelunca et habitatio fuit (apud Carte, vol. i. p. 195). From bishop Nicholson (English Historical Library, p. 65. 98), I understand, that fair copies of John of Tinemouth's ample collections are preserved in the libraries of Oxford, Lambeth, &c.

* See the mission of Wilfrid, &c. in Bede, Hist. Eccles. l. iv. c. 13. 16. p. 155, 156. 159.

† From the concurrent testimony of Bede (l. ii. c. 1. p. 78), and William of Malmesbury (l. iii. p. 102), it appears that the Anglo-Saxons, from the first, to the last, age, persisted in this unnatural practice. Their youths were publicly sold in the market of Rome.

‡ According to the laws of Ina, they could not be lawfully sold beyond the seas.

were much less numerous than the strangers and captives, who had lost their liberty, or changed their masters, by the accidents of war. When time and religion had mitigated the fierce spirit of the Anglo-Saxons, the laws encouraged the frequent practice of manumission ; and their subjects, of Welsh or Cambrian extraction, assume the respectable station of inferior freemen, possessed of lands, and entitled to the rights of civil society. Such gentle treatment might secure the allegiance of a fierce people, who had been recently subdued on the confines of Wales and Cornwall. The sage Ina, the legislator of Wessex, united the two nations in the bands of domestic alliance ; and four British lords of Somersetshire may be honourably distinguished in the court of a Saxon monarch*.

Christianity was still professed in the mountains of Wales ; but in the *form* of the clerical tonsure, and in the *day* of the celebration of Easter, they obstinately resisted the imperious mandates of the Roman pontiffs. The use of the Latin language was insensibly abolished, and the Britons were deprived of the arts and learning which Italy communicated to her Saxon proselytes. In Wales and Armorica, the Celtic tongue, the native idiom of the West, was preserved and propagated ; and the *Bards*, who had been the companions of the Druids, were still protected, in the sixteenth century, by the laws of Elizabeth. Their chief, a respectable officer of the courts of Pengwern, or Aberfraw, or Caermathaen, accompanied the king's servants to war : the monarchy of the Britons, which he sung in the front of battle, excited their courage, and justified their depredations ; and the songster claimed for his legitimate prize the fairest heifer of the spoil. His sub-

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* See Carte's Hist. of England; vol. i. p. 278.

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ordinate ministers, the masters and disciples of vocal and instrumental music, visited, in their respective circuits, the royal, the noble, and the plebeian houses; and the public poverty, almost exhausted by the clergy, was oppressed by the importunate demands of the bards. Their rank and merit were ascertained by solemn trials, and the strong belief of supernatural inspiration exalted the fancy of the poet, and of his audience*. The last retreats of Celtic freedom, the extreme territories of Gaul and Britain, were less adapted to agriculture than to pasturage: the wealth of the Britons consisted in their flocks and herds; milk and flesh were their ordinary food; and bread was sometimes esteemed, or rejected, as a foreign luxury. Liberty had peopled the mountains of Wales and the morasses of Armorica: but their populousness has been maliciously ascribed to the loose practice of polygamy; and the houses of these licentious barbarians have been supposed to contain ten wives, and perhaps fifty children. Their disposition was rash and choleric: they were bold in action and in speech; and as they were ignorant of the arts of peace, they alternately indulged their passions in foreign and domestic war. The cavalry of Armorica, the spearmen of Gwent, and the archers of Merioneth, were equally formidable; but their poverty could seldom procure either shields or helmets; and the inconvenient weight would have retarded the speed and agility of their desultory operations. One of the greatest of the English monarchs was requested to satisfy the curiosity of a Greek emperor concerning the state of Britain; and Henry II. could assert, from his personal experience, that Wales was in-

* Mr. Pennant's *Tour in Wales* (p. 426—449) has furnished me with a curious and interesting account of the Welsh bards. In the year 1568, a session was held at Caerwys by the special command of queen Elizabeth, and regular degrees in vocal and instrumental music were conferred on fifty-five minstrels. The prize (a silver harp) was adjudged by the Mostyn family.

habited by a race of naked warriors, who encountered, without fear, the defensive armour of their enemies*.

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By the revolution of Britain, the limits of science, as well as of empire, were contracted. The dark cloud, which had been cleared by the Phœnician discoveries, and finally dispelled by the arms of Cæsar, again settled on the shores of the Atlantic, and a Roman province was again lost among the fabulous islands of the ocean. The arts of navigation, by which they had acquired the empire of Britain and of the sea, were soon neglected by the indolent Barbarians, who supinely renounced all the commercial advantages of their insular situation. Seven independent kingdoms were agitated by perpetual discord; and the *British world* was seldom connected, either in peace or war, with the nations of the continent†.

Obscure or
fabulous
state of
Britain.

I have now accomplished the laborious narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, from the fortunate age of Trajan and the Antonines, to its total extinction in the West, about five centuries after the Christian æra. At that unhappy period, the Saxons fiercely struggled with the natives for the possession of Britain; Gaul and Spain were divided between the powerful monarchies of the Franks and Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Suevi and Burgundians: Africa was exposed to the cruel persecution of the Vandals, and the savage insults of the Moors: Rome and Italy, as far as the banks of the Danube, were afflicted by an army of Barbarian mercenaries, whose lawless tyranny was succeeded by

Fall of the
Roman em-
pire in the
West.

* The picture of Welsh and Armorican manners is drawn from Giraldus (Descript. Cambriæ, c. 6—15, inter Script. Camden. p. 886—891), and the authors quoted by the Abbé de Vertot (Hist. Critique, tom. ii. p. 259—266).

† In the copious history of Gregory of Tours, we cannot find any traces of hostile or friendly intercourse between France and England, except in the marriage of the daughter of Caribert, king of Paris, *quam regis cujusdam in Cantia filius matrimonio copulavit* (l. ix. c. 26, in tom. ii. p. 348). The bishop of Tours ended his history and his life almost immediately before the conversion of Kent.

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XXXI. jects of the empire, who, by the use of the Latin language, more particularly deserved the name and privileges of Romans, were oppressed by the disgrace and calamities of foreign conquest; and the victorious nations of Germany established a new system of manners and government in the western countries of Europe. The majesty of Rome was faintly represented by the princes of Constantinople, the feeble and imaginary successors of Augustus. Yet they continued to reign over the East, from the Danube to the Nile and Tigris; the Gothic and Vandal kingdoms of Italy and Africa were subverted by the arms of Justinian; and the history of the *Greek* emperors may still afford a long series of instructive lessons, and interesting revolutions.

General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West.

THE Greeks, after their country had been reduced into a province, imputed the triumphs of Rome, not to the merit, but to the FORTUNE, of the republic. The inconstant goddess, who so blindly distributes and resumes her favours, had *now* consented (such was the language of envious flattery) to resign her wings, to descend from her globe, and to fix her firm and immutable throne on the banks of the Tyber. A wiser Greek, who has composed, with a philosophic spirit, the memorable history of his own times, deprived his countrymen of this vain and delusive comfort, by opening to their view the deep foundations of the greatness of Rome*. The fidelity of the citizens to each other, and to the state, was confirmed by education and religion. Honour, as well as virtue, was the principle of the republic; the ambitious citizens laboured to deserve the solemn glories of a triumph; and the ardour of the Roman youth was kindled into active emulation, as often as they beheld the domestic images of their ancestors†. The temperate struggles of the patricians and plebeians had finally established the firm and equal balance of the constitution, which united the freedom of popular assemblies, with the authority and wisdom of a senate, and the executive powers of a regal magistrate. When the consul displayed the standard of the republic, each citizen bound himself, by the obligation of an oath, to draw his sword in the cause of his country,

* See the inestimable remains of the sixth book of Polybius, and many other parts of his general history, particularly a digression in the seventeenth book, in which he compares the phalanx and the legion.

† Sallust, de Bell. Jugurthin. c. 4. Such were the generous professions of P. Scipio and Q. Maximus. The Latin historian had read, and most probably transcribes, Polybius, their contemporary and friend.

till he had discharged the sacred duty by a military service of ten years. This wise institution continually poured into the field the rising generations of free-men and soldiers ; and their numbers were reinforced by the warlike and populous states of Italy, who, after a brave resistance, had yielded to the valour, and embraced the alliance, of the Romans. The sage historian, who excited the virtue of the younger Scipio, and beheld the ruin of Carthage, has accurately described their military system ; their levies, arms, exercises, subordination, marches, encampments ; and the invincible legion, superior in active strength to the Macedonian phalanx of Philip and Alexander. From these institutions of peace and war, Polybius has deduced the spirit and success of a people incapable of fear, and impatient of repose. The ambitious design of conquest, which might have been defeated by the seasonable conspiracy of mankind, was attempted and achieved ; and the perpetual violation of justice was maintained by the political virtues of prudence and courage. The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the Ocean ; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the *iron* monarchy of Rome*.

The rise of a city, which swelled into an empire, may deserve, as a singular prodigy, the reflection of a philosophic mind. But the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay ; the

* See Daniel, ii. 31—40. “ And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as *iron* ; “ forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things.” The remainder of the prophecy (the mixture of iron and *clay*) was accomplished, according to St. Jerom, in his own time. Sicut enim in principio nihil Romano Imperio fortius et durius, ita in fine rerum nihil imbecillius : quum et in bellis civilibus et adversus diversas nationes, aliarum gentium barbararum auxilio indigemus (Opera, tom. v. p. 572).

causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest ; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious ; and instead of inquiring *why* the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long. The victorious legions, who, in distant wars, acquired the vices of strangers and mercenaries, first oppressed the freedom of the republic, and afterwards violated the majesty of the purple. The emperors, anxious for their personal safety and the public peace, were reduced to the base expedient of corrupting the discipline which rendered them alike formidable to their sovereign and to the enemy ; the vigour of the military government was relaxed, and finally dissolved, by the partial institutions of Constantine ; and the Roman world was overwhelmed by a deluge of Barbarians.

The decay of Rome has been frequently ascribed to the translation of the seat of empire ; but this history has already shown, that the powers of government were *divided*, rather than *removed*. The throne of Constantinople was erected in the East ; while the West was still possessed by a series of emperors who held their residence in Italy, and claimed their equal inheritance of the legions and provinces. This dangerous novelty impaired the strength, and fomented the vices, of a double reign : the instruments of an oppressive and arbitrary system were multiplied ; and a vain emulation of luxury, not of merit, was introduced and supported between the degenerate successors of Theodosius. Extreme distress, which unites the virtue of a free people, embitters the factions of a declining monarchy. The hostile favourites of Arcadius and Honorius betrayed the republic to its common enemies ; and the Byzantine court beheld with

indifference, perhaps with pleasure, the disgrace of Rome, the misfortunes of Italy, and the loss of the West. Under the succeeding reigns, the alliance of the two empires was restored; but the aid of the Oriental Romans was tardy, doubtful, and ineffectual; and the national schism of the Greeks and Latins was enlarged by the perpetual difference of language and manners, of interest, and even of religion. Yet the salutary event approved in some measure the judgment of Constantine. During a long period of decay, his impregnable city repelled the victorious armies of Barbarians, protected the wealth of Asia, and commanded, both in peace and war, the important straits which connect the Euxine and Mediterranean seas. The foundation of Constantinople more essentially contributed to the preservation of the East, than to the ruin of the West.

The pure and genuine influence of Christianity may be traced in its beneficial, though imperfect, effects on the Barbarian proselytes of the North. If the decline of the Roman empire was hastened by the conversion of Constantine, his victorious religion broke the violence of the fall, and mollified the ferocious temper of the conquerors.

This awful revolution may be usefully applied to the instruction of the present age. It is the duty of a patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country: but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own, or the neighbouring kingdoms, may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the

system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies. The savage nations of the globe are the common enemies of civilized society; and we may inquire with anxious curiosity whether Europe is still threatened with a repetition of those calamities which formerly oppressed the arms and institutions of Rome. Perhaps the same reflections will illustrate the fall of that mighty empire, and explain the probable causes of our actual security.

I. The Romans were ignorant of the extent of their danger, and the number of their enemies. Beyond the Rhine and Danube, the northern countries of Europe and Asia were filled with innumerable tribes of hunters and shepherds, poor, voracious, and turbulent; bold in arms, and impatient to ravish the fruits of industry. The Barbarian world was agitated by the rapid impulse of war; and the peace of Gaul or Italy was shaken by the distant revolutions of China. The Huns, who fled before a victorious enemy, directed their march towards the West; and the torrent was swelled by the gradual accession of captives and allies. The flying tribes who yielded to the Huns, assumed in *their* turn the spirit of conquest; the endless column of Barbarians pressed on the Roman empire with accumulated weight; and if the foremost were destroyed, the vacant space was instantly replenished by new assailants. Such formidable emigrations can no longer issue from the North; and the long repose, which has been imputed to the decrease of population, is the happy consequence of the progress of arts and agriculture. Instead of some rude villages, thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany now produces a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns: the Christian kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Poland, have been successively established; and the

Hanse merchants, with the Teutonic knights, have extended their colonies along the coast of the Baltic, as far as the Gulf of Finland. From the Gulf of Finland to the Eastern Ocean, Russia now assumes the form of a powerful and civilized empire. The plough, the loom, and the forge are introduced on the banks of the Volga, the Oby, and the Lena ; and the fiercest of the Tartar hordes have been taught to tremble and obey. The reign of independent Barbarism is now contracted to a narrow span ; and the remnant of Calmucks or Uzbecks, whose forces may be almost numbered, cannot seriously excite the apprehensions of the great republic of Europe. Yet this apparent security should not tempt us to forget that new enemies, and unknown dangers, may *possibly* arise from some obscure people, scarcely visible in the map of the world. The Arabs or Saracens, who spread their conquests from India to Spain, had languished in poverty and contempt, till Mahomet breathed into those savage bodies the soul of enthusiasm.

II. The empire of Rome was firmly established by the singular and perfect coalition of its members. The subject nations, resigning the hope, and even the wish, of independence, embraced the character of Roman citizens ; and the provinces of the West were reluctantly torn by the Barbarians from the bosom of their mother country. But this union was purchased by the loss of national freedom and military spirit ; and the servile provinces, destitute of life and motion, expected their safety from the mercenary troops and governors, who were directed by the orders of a distant court. The happiness of a hundred millions depended on the personal merit of one or two men, perhaps children, whose minds were corrupted by education, luxury, and despotic power. The deepest wounds were inflicted on the empire during the minorities of the sons and grandsons of Theodosius ; and after those incapable princes seemed to attain the age

of manhood, they abandoned the church to the bishops, the state to the eunuchs, and the provinces to the Barbarians. Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal, kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent, states : the chances of royal and ministerial talents are multiplied, at least with the number of its rulers ; and a Julian, or Semiramis, may reign in the North, while Arcadius and Honorius again slumber on the thrones of the South. The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame ; republics have acquired order and stability ; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation ; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals : in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and indecisive contests. If a savage conqueror should issue from the deserts of Tartary, he must repeatedly vanquish the robust peasants of Russia, the numerous armies of Germany, the gallant nobles of France, and the intrepid freemen of Britain ; who, perhaps, might confederate for their common defence. Should the victorious Barbarians carry slavery and desolation as far as the Atlantic Ocean, ten thousand vessels would transport beyond their pursuit the remains of civilized society ; and Europe would revive and flourish in the American world, which is already filled with her colonies and institutions.

III. Cold, poverty, and a life of danger and fatigue, fortify the strength and courage of Barbarians. In every age they have oppressed the polite and peaceful nations of China, India, and Persia, who neglected, and still neglect, to counterbalance these natural powers by the resources of military art. The

warlike states of antiquity, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, educated a race of soldiers, exercised their bodies, disciplined their courage, multiplied their forces by regular evolutions, and converted the iron which they possessed into strong and serviceable weapons. But this superiority insensibly declined with their laws and manners; and the feeble policy of Constantine and his successors armed and instructed, for the ruin of the empire, the rude valour of the Barbarian mercenaries. The military art has been changed by the invention of gunpowder; which enables men to command the two most powerful agents of nature, air and fire. Mathematics, chemistry, mechanics, architecture, have been applied to the service of war; and the adverse parties oppose to each other the most elaborate modes of attack and of defence. Historians may indignantly observe, that the preparations of a siege would found and maintain a flourishing colony; yet we cannot be displeased, that the subversion of a city should be a work of cost and difficulty; or that an industrious people should be protected by those arts, which survive and supply the decay of military virtue. Cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse; and Europe is secure from any future irruption of Barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous. Their gradual advances in the science of war would always be accompanied, as we may learn from the example of Russia, with a proportionable improvement in the arts of peace and civil policy; and they themselves must deserve a place among the polished nations whom they subdue.

Should these speculations be found doubtful or fallacious, there still remains a more humble source of comfort and hope. The discoveries of ancient and modern navigators, and the domestic history, or tra-

dition, of the most enlightened nations, represent the *human savage* naked both in mind and body, and destitute of laws, of arts, of ideas, and almost of language. From this abject condition, he has gradually arisen to command the animals, to fertilise the earth, to traverse the ocean, and to measure the heavens. His progress in the improvement and exercise of his mental and corporeal faculties has been irregular and various ; infinitely slow in the beginning, and increasing by degrees with redoubled velocity : ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall ; and the several climates of the globe have felt the vicissitudes of light and darkness. Yet the experience of four thousand years should enlarge our hopes, and diminish our apprehensions : we cannot determine to what height the human species may aspire in their advances towards perfection ; but it may safely be presumed, that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism. The improvements of society may be viewed under a threefold aspect. 1. The poet or philosopher illustrates his age and country by the efforts of a *single* mind ; but these superior powers of reason or fancy are rare and spontaneous productions ; and the genius of Homer, or Cicero, or Newton, would excite less admiration, if they could be created by the will of a prince, or the lessons of a preceptor. 2. The benefits of law and policy, of trade and manufactures, of arts and sciences, are more solid and permanent ; and *many* individuals may be qualified, by education and discipline, to promote, in their respective stations, the interest of the community. But this general order is the effect of skill and labour ; and the complex machinery may be decayed by time, or injured by violence. 3. Fortunately for mankind, the more

useful, or, at least, more necessary arts, can be performed without superior talents, or national subordination; without the powers of *one*, or the union of *many*. Each village, each family, each individual, must always possess both ability and inclination to perpetuate the use of fire* and of metals; the propagation and service of domestic animals; the methods of hunting and fishing; the rudiments of navigation; the imperfect cultivation of corn, or other nutritive grain; and the simple practice of the mechanic trades. Private genius and public industry may be extirpated; but these hardy plants survive the tempest, and strike an everlasting root into the most unfavourable soil. The splendid days of Augustus and Trajan were eclipsed by a cloud of ignorance; and the Barbarians subverted the laws and palaces of Rome. But the scythe, the invention or emblem of Saturn†, still continued annually to mow the harvests of Italy; and the human feasts of the Læstrigons‡ have never been renewed on the coast of Campania.

Since the first discovery of the arts, war, commerce, and religion, have diffused, among the savages of the Old and New World, these inestimable gifts: they have been successively propagated; they can never be lost. We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion, that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the

* It is certain, however strange, that many nations have been ignorant of the use of fire. Even the ingenious natives of Otaheite, who are destitute of metals, have not invented any earthen vessels capable of sustaining the action of fire, and of communicating the heat to the liquids which they contain.

† Plutarch, *Quæst. Rom.* in tom. ii. p. 275. Macrob. *Saturnal.* l. i. c. 8. p. 152. edit. London. The arrival of Saturn (of his religious worship) in a ship, may indicate, that the savage coast of Latium was first discovered and civilized by the Phœnicians.

‡ In the ninth and tenth books of the *Odyssey*, Homer has embellished the tales of fearful and credulous sailors, who transformed the cannibals of Italy and Sicily into monstrous giants.

happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race *.

* The merit of discovery has too often been stained with avarice, cruelty, and fanaticism ; and the intercourse of nations has produced the communication of disease and prejudice. A singular exception is due to the virtue of our own times and country. The five great voyages, successively undertaken by the command of his Majesty, (George III.) were inspired by the pure and generous love of science and of mankind. The same prince, adapting his benefactions to the different stages of society, has founded a school of painting in his capital ; and has introduced into the islands of the South Sea the vegetables and animals most useful to human life.

CHAP. XXXII.

Zeno and Anastasius, Emperors of the East.—Birth, Education, and first Exploits of Theodoric the Ostrogoth.—His Invasion and Conquest of Italy.—The Gothic Kingdom of Italy.—State of the West.—Military and Civil Government.—The Senator Boethius.—Last Acts and Death of Theodoric.

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A. D. 476
—527.

AFTER the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, an interval of fifty years, till the memorable reign of Justinian, is faintly marked by the obscure names and imperfect annals of Zeno, Anastasius, and Justin, who successively ascended the throne of Constantinople. During the same period, Italy revived and flourished under the government of a Gothic king, who might have deserved a statue among the best and bravest of the ancient Romans.

Birth and
education of
Theodoric,
A. D. 455
—475.

Theodoric the Ostrogoth, the fourteenth in lineal descent of the royal line of the Amali, was born in the neighbourhood of Vienna two years after the death of Attila. A recent victory had restored the independence of the Ostrogoths; and the three brothers, Walamir, Theodemir, and Widimir, who ruled that warlike nation with united counsels, had separately pitched their habitations in the fertile though desolate province of Pannonia. The Huns still threatened their revolted subjects, but their hasty attack was repelled by the single forces of Walimir, and the news of his victory reached the distant camp of his brother in the same auspicious moment that the favourite concubine of Theodemir was delivered of a son and heir. In the eighth year of his age, Theodoric was reluctantly yielded by his father to the public interest, as the pledge of an alliance which Leo, emperor of the East, had consented to purchase

by an annual subsidy of three hundred pounds of gold. The royal hostage was educated at Constantinople with care and tenderness. His body was formed to all the exercises of war, his mind was expanded by the habits of liberal conversation; he frequented the schools of the most skilful masters; but he disdained or neglected the arts of Greece, and so ignorant did he always remain of the first elements of science, that a rude mark was contrived to represent the signature of the illiterate king of Italy. As soon as he had attained the age of eighteen, he was restored to the wishes of the Ostrogoths, whom the emperor aspired to gain by liberality and confidence. Walamir had fallen in battle; the youngest of the brothers, Widimer, had led away into Italy and Gaul an army of Barbarians; and the whole nation acknowledged for their king the father of Theodoric. His ferocious subjects admired the strength and stature of their young prince; and he soon convinced them that he had not degenerated from the valour of his ancestors. At the head of six thousand volunteers he secretly left the camp in quest of adventures, descended the Danube as far as Singidunum or Belgrade, and soon returned to his father with the spoils of a Sarmatian king whom he had vanquished and slain. Such triumphs, however, were productive only of fame, and the invincible Ostrogoths were reduced to extreme distress by the want of clothing and food. They unanimously resolved to desert their Pannonian encampments, and boldly to advance into the warm and wealthy neighbourhood of the Byzantine court, which already maintained in pride and luxury so many bands of confederate Goths. After proving by some acts of hostility that they could be dangerous, or at least troublesome enemies, the Ostrogoths sold at a high price their reconciliation and fidelity, accepted a donative of lands and money, and were in-

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The reign
of Zeno,
A. D. 474
—491.
Feb.
April 9.

trusted with the defence of the lower Danube, under the command of Theodoric, who succeeded after his father's death to the hereditary throne of the Amali.

A hero, descended from a race of kings, must have despised the base Isaurian who was invested with the Roman purple, without any endowments of mind or body, without any advantages of royal birth, or superior qualifications. After the failure of the Theodosian line, the choice of Pulcheria and of the senate might be justified in some measure by the characters of Martian and Leo, but the latter of these princes confirmed and dishonoured his reign by the perfidious murder of Aspar and his sons, who too rigorously exacted the debt of gratitude and obedience. The inheritance of Leo and of the East was peaceably devolved on his infant grandson, the son of his daughter Ariadne; and her Isaurian husband, the fortunate Trascalisseus, exchanged that barbarous sound for the Grecian appellation of Zeno. After the decease of the elder Leo, he approached with unnatural respect the throne of his son, humbly received, as a gift, the second rank in the empire, and soon excited the public suspicion on the sudden and premature death of his young colleague, whose life could no longer promote the success of his ambition. But the palace of Constantinople was ruled by female influence, and agitated by female passions: and Verina, the widow of Leo, claiming his empire as her own, pronounced a sentence of deposition against the worthless and ungrateful servant on whom she alone had bestowed the sceptre of the East. As soon as she sounded a revolt in the ears of Zeno, he fled with precipitation into the mountains of Isauria, and her brother Basiliscus, already infamous by his African expedition, was unanimously proclaimed by the servile senate. But the reign of the usurper was short and turbulent. Basiliscus presumed to assassinate

the lover of his sister; he dared to offend the lover of his wife, the vain and insolent Harmatius, who, in the midst of Asiatic luxury, affected the dress, the demeanour, and the surname of Achilles*. By the conspiracy of the malcontents, Zeno was recalled from exile; the armies, the capital, the person of Basiliscus, were betrayed; and his whole family was condemned to the long agony of cold and hunger by the inhuman conqueror, who wanted courage to encounter or to forgive his enemies. The haughty spirit of Verina was still incapable of submission or repose. She provoked the enmity of a favourite general, embraced his cause as soon as he was disgraced, created a new emperor in Syria and Egypt, raised an army of seventy thousand men, and persisted to the last moment of her life in a fruitless rebellion. While the East was afflicted by the passions of Verina, her daughter Ariadne was distinguished by the female virtues of mildness and fidelity; she followed her husband in his exile, and after his restoration she implored his clemency in favour of her mother. On the decease of Zeno, Ariadne, the daughter, the mother, and the widow of an emperor, gave her hand and the Imperial title to Anastasius, an aged domestic of the palace, who survived his elevation above twenty-seven years, and whose character is attested by the acclamation of the people, "Reign as you have lived†."

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Of Anastasius,
A. D. 491
—518.
April 11.
July 8.

Whatever fear or affection could bestow was profusely lavished by Zeno on the king of the Ostrogoths; the rank of patrician and consul, the command

Service and
revolt of
Theodoric,
A. D. 475
—488.

* Suidas, tom. i. p. 332, 333. edit. Kuster.

† The contemporary histories of Malchus and Candidus are lost; but some extracts or fragments have been saved by Photius (lxxviii, lxxix. p. 100—102), Constantine Porphyrogenitus (Excerpt. Leg. p. 78—97), and in various articles of the Lexicon of Suidas. The Chronicle of Marcellinus (Imago Historiæ) are originals for the reigns of Zeno and Anastasius; and I must acknowledge, almost for the last time, my obligations to the large and accurate collection of Tillemont (Hist. des Emp. tom. vi. p. 472—652).

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of the Palatine troops, an equestrian statue, a treasure in gold and silver of many thousand pounds, the name of son, and the promise of a rich and honourable wife. As long as Theodoric condescended to serve, he supported with courage and fidelity the cause of his benefactor : his rapid march contributed to the restoration of Zeno ; and in the second revolt, the *Walamirs*, as they were called, pursued and pressed the Asiatic rebels, till they left an easy victory to the Imperial troops. But the faithful servant was suddenly converted into a formidable enemy, who spread the flames of war from Constantinople to the Adriatic ; many flourishing cities were reduced to ashes, and the agriculture of Thrace was almost extirpated by the wanton cruelty of the Goths, who deprived their captive peasants of the right hand that guided the plough. On such occasions, Theodoric sustained the loud and specious reproach of disloyalty, of ingratitude, and of insatiate avarice, which could be only excused by the hard necessity of his situation. He reigned, not as the monarch, but as the minister of a ferocious people, whose spirit was unbroken by slavery, and impatient of real or imaginary insults. Their poverty was incurable : since the most liberal donatives were soon dissipated in wasteful luxury, and the most fertile estates became barren in their hands ; they despised, but they envied, the laborious provincials ; and when their subsistence had failed, the Ostrogoths embraced the familiar resources of war and rapine. It had been the wish of Theodoric (such at least was his declaration) to lead a peaceful, obscure, obedient life, on the confines of Scythia, till the Byzantine court, by splendid and fallacious promises, seduced him to attack a confederate tribe of Goths, who had been engaged in the party of Basiliscus. He marched from his station in Mæsia, on the solemn assurance that before

he reached Adrianople, he should meet a plentiful convoy of provisions, and a reinforcement of eight thousand horse and thirty thousand foot, while the legions of Asia were encamped at Heraclea to second his operations. These measures were disappointed by mutual jealousy. As he advanced into Thrace, the son of Theodemir found an inhospitable solitude, and his Gothic followers, with a heavy train of horses, of mules, and of waggons, were betrayed by their guides among the rocks and precipices of Mount Sondis, where he was assaulted by the arms and invectives of Theodoric the son of Triarius. From a neighbouring height, his artful rival harangued the camp of the *Walamirs*, and branded their leader with the opprobrious names of child, of madman, of perjured traitor, the enemy of his blood and nation. "Are you ignorant," exclaimed the son of Triarius, "that it is the constant policy of the Romans to destroy the Goths by each other's swords? Are you insensible that the victor in this unnatural contest will be exposed, and justly exposed, to their implacable revenge? Where are those warriors, my kinsmen and thy own, whose widows now lament that their lives were sacrificed to thy rash ambition? Where is the wealth which thy soldiers possessed when they were first allured from their native homes to inlist under thy standard? Each of them was then master of three or four horses; they now follow thee on foot like slaves, through the deserts of Thrace; those men who were tempted by the hope of measuring gold with a bushel, those brave men who are as free and as noble as thyself." A language so well suited to the temper of the Goths excited clamour and discontent; and the son of Theodemir, apprehensive of being left alone, was compelled to embrace his

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He under-
takes the
conquest
of Italy,
A. D. 489.

brethren, and to imitate the example of Roman perfidy.

In every state of his fortune, the prudence and firmness of Theodoric were equally conspicuous; whether he threatened Constantinople at the head of the confederate Goths, or retreated with a faithful band to the mountains and sea-coast of Epirus. At length the accidental death of the son of Triarius destroyed the balance which the Romans had been so anxious to preserve, the whole nation acknowledged the supremacy of the Amali, and the Byzantine court subscribed an ignominious and oppressive treaty*. The senate had already declared, that it was necessary to choose a party among the Goths, since the public was unequal to the support of their united forces; a subsidy of two thousand pounds of gold, with the ample pay of thirteen thousand men, were required for the least considerable of their armies†; and the Isaurians, who guarded not the empire but the emperor, enjoyed, besides the privilege of rapine, an annual pension of five thousand pounds. The sagacious mind of Theodoric soon perceived that he was odious to the Romans, and suspected by the Barbarians; he understood the popular murmur, that his subjects were exposed in their frozen huts to intolerable hardships, while their king was dissolved in the luxury of Greece; and he prevented the painful alternative of encountering the Goths, as the champion, or of leading them to the field as the enemy, of Zeno. Embracing an enterprise worthy of his courage and ambition, Theodoric addressed the emperor in the following words: “Al-
though your servant is maintained in affluence by

* See Malchus (p. 91), and Evagrius (L. iii. c. 35).

† Malchus, p. 85. In a single action, which was decided by the skill and discipline of Sabinian, Theodoric could lose 5000 men.

“ your liberality, graciously listen to the wishes of
 “ my heart! Italy, the inheritance of your prede- (HAP.
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 “ cessors, and Rome itself, the head and mistress of
 “ the world, now fluctuate under the violence and
 “ oppression of Odoacer the mercenary. Direct
 “ me, with my national troops, to march against the
 “ tyrant. If I fall, you will be relieved from an
 “ expensive and troublesome friend: if, with the
 “ Divine permission, I succeed, I shall govern in
 “ your name, and to your glory, the Roman senate,
 “ and the part of the republic delivered from slavery
 “ by my victorious arms.” The proposal of Theodoric was accepted, and perhaps had been suggested, by the Byzantine court. But the forms of the commission or grant appear to have been expressed with a prudent ambiguity, which might be explained by the event; and it was left doubtful, whether the conqueror of Italy should reign as the lieutenant, the vassal, or the ally of the emperor of the East*.

The reputation both of the leader and of the war His march. diffused an universal ardour; the *Walamirs* were multiplied by the Gothic swarms already engaged in the service, or seated in the provinces of the empire; and each bold Barbarian, who had heard of the wealth and beauty of Italy, was impatient to seek, through the most perilous adventures, the possession of such enchanting objects. The march of Theodoric must be considered as the emigration of an entire people; the wives and children of the Goths, their aged parents, and most precious effects, were carefully transported; and some idea may be formed of the heavy baggage that now followed the camp, by the loss of two thousand waggons, which had been sustained in a single action in the war of Epirus. For

* Jornandes (c. 57, p. 696, 697) has abridged the great history of Cassiodorus. See, compare, and reconcile, Procopius (Gothic. l. i. c. i.) the Valesian Fragment (p. 718), Theophanes (p. 113), and Marcellinus (in Chron.).

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their subsistence, the Goths depended on the magazines of corn which was ground in portable mills by the hands of their women ; on the milk and flesh of their flocks and herds ; on the casual produce of the chase, and upon the contributions which they might impose on all who should presume to dispute the passage, or to refuse their friendly assistance. Notwithstanding these precautions, they were exposed to the danger, and almost to the distress of famine, in a march of seven hundred miles, which had been undertaken in the depth of a rigorous winter. Since the fall of the Roman power, Dacia and Pannonia no longer exhibited the rich prospect of populous cities, well-cultivated fields, and convenient highways : the reign of barbarism and desolation was restored, and the tribes of Bulgarians, Gepidæ, and Sarmatians, who had occupied the vacant province, were prompted by their native fierceness, or the solicitations of Odoacer, to resist the progress of his enemy. In many obscure though bloody battles, Theodoric fought and vanquished ; till at length, surmounting every obstacle by skilful conduct and persevering courage, he descended from the Julian Alps, and displayed his invincible banners on the confines of Italy..

The three
defeats of
Odoacer,
A. D. 489.
Aug. 28.
Sept. 27 ;
A. D. 490.
August.

Odoacer, a rival not unworthy of his arms, had already occupied the advantageous and well-known post of the river Sontius near the ruins of Aquileia, at the head of a powerful host, whose independent *kings* or leaders disdained the duties of subordination and the prudence of delays. No sooner had Theodoric granted a short repose and refreshment to his wearied cavalry, than he boldly attacked the fortifications of the enemy ; the Ostrogoths showed more ardour to acquire than the mercenaries to defend the lands of Italy ; and the reward of the first victory was the possession of the Venetian province as

far as the walls of Verona. In the neighbourhood of that city, on the steep banks of the rapid Adige, he was opposed by a new army reinforced in its numbers, and not impaired in its courage: the contest was more obstinate, but the event was still more decisive; Odoacer fled to Ravenna, Theodoric advanced to Milan, and the vanquished troops saluted their conqueror with loud acclamations of respect and fidelity. But their want either of constancy or of faith soon exposed him to the most imminent danger; his vanguard, with several Gothic counts which had been rashly intrusted to a deserter, was betrayed and destroyed near Faenza by his double treachery; Odoacer again appeared master of the field, and the invader, strongly entrenched in his camp of Pavia, was reduced to solicit the aid of a kindred nation, the Visigoths of Gaul. In the course of this history, the most voracious appetite for war will be abundantly satiated; nor can I much lament that our dark and imperfect materials do not afford a more ample narrative of the distress of Italy, and of the fierce conflict, which was finally decided by the abilities, experience, and valour of the Gothic king. Immediately before the battle of Verona, he visited the tent of his mother and sister, and requested, that on a day, the most illustrious festival of his life, they would adorn him with the rich garments which they had worked with their own hands. "Our glory," said he, "is mutual and inseparable. You are known to the world as the mother of Theodoric; and it becomes me to prove that I am the genuine offspring of those heroes from whom I claim my descent." The wife or concubine of Theodemir was inspired with the spirit of the German matrons, who esteemed their son's honour far above their safety; and it is reported, that in a desperate action, when Theodoric himself was hurried along by the torrent of a flying

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His capitulation and death,
A. D. 493.
March 5.

crowd, she boldly met them at the entrance of the camp, and, by her generous reproaches, drove them back on the swords of the enemy.

From the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, Theodoric reigned by the right of conquest: the Vandal ambassadors surrendered the island of Sicily, as a lawful appendage of his kingdom; and he was accepted as the deliverer of Rome by the senate and people, who had shut their gates against the flying usurper. Ravenna alone, secure in the fortifications of art and nature, still sustained a siege of almost three years; and the daring sallies of Odoacer carried slaughter and dismay into the Gothic camp. At length, destitute of provisions and hopeless of relief, that unfortunate monarch yielded to the groans of his subjects and the clamours of his soldiers. A treaty of peace was negotiated by the bishop of Ravenna; the Ostrogoths were admitted into the city, and the hostile kings consented, under the sanction of an oath, to rule with equal and undivided authority the provinces of Italy. The event of such an agreement may be easily foreseen. After some days had been devoted to the semblance of joy and friendship, Odoacer, in the midst of a solemn banquet, was stabbed by the hand, or at least by the command, of his rival. Secret and effectual orders had been previously despatched; the faithless and rapacious mercenaries, at the same moment, and without resistance, were universally massacred; and the royalty of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths, with the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the emperor of the East. The design of a conspiracy was imputed, according to the usual forms, to the prostrate tyrant; but his innocence and the guilt of his conqueror are sufficiently proved by the advantageous treaty which *force* would not sincerely have granted, nor *weakness* have rashly infringed. The jealousy of power, and the mischiefs

of discord, may suggest a more decent apology, and a sentence less rigorous may be pronounced against a crime which was necessary to introduce into Italy a generation of public felicity. The living author of this felicity was audaciously praised in his own presence by sacred and profane orators; but history (in his time she was mute and inglorious) has not left any just representation of the events which displayed, or of the defects which clouded, the virtues of Theodoric*. One record of his fame, the volume of public epistles composed by Cassiodorius in the royal name, is still extant, and has obtained more implicit credit than it seems to deserve. They exhibit the forms, rather than the substance, of his government; and we should vainly search for the pure and spontaneous sentiments of the Barbarian amidst the declamation and learning of a sophist, the wishes of a Roman senator, the precedents of office, and the vague professions, which, in every court and on every occasion, compose the language of discreet ministers. The reputation of Theodoric may repose with more confidence on the visible peace and prosperity of a reign of thirty-three years; the unanimous esteem of his own times, and the memory of his wisdom and courage, his justice and humanity, which was deeply impressed on the minds of the Goths and Italians.

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Reign of
Theodoric,
king of
Italy;
A. D. 493,
Mar. 5.—
A. D. 526,
Aug. 30.

The partition of the lands of Italy, of which Theodoric assigned the third part to his soldiers, is *honourably* arraigned as the sole injustice of his life. And even this act may be fairly justified by the example of Odoacer, the rights of conquest, the true interest of the Italians, and the sacred duty of subsisting a whole people, who, on the faith of his promises, had

Partition of
lands.

* Our best materials are occasional hints from Procopius and the Valesian Fragment, which was discovered by Sirmond, and is published at the end of Ammianus Marcellinus. The author's name is unknown, and his style is barbarous; but in his various facts he exhibits the knowledge, without the passions, of a contemporary.

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transported themselves into a distant land*. Under the reign of Theodoric, and in the happy climate of Italy, the Goths soon multiplied to a formidable host of two hundred thousand men, and the whole amount of their families may be computed by the ordinary addition of women and children. Their invasion of property, a part of which must have been already vacant, was disguised by the generous but improper name of *hospitality*; these unwelcome guests were irregularly dispersed over the face of Italy, and the lot of each Barbarian was adequate to his birth and office, the number of his followers, and the rustic wealth which he possessed in slaves and cattle. The distinctions of noble and plebeian were acknowledged; but the lands of every freeman were exempt from taxes, and he enjoyed the inestimable privilege of being subject only to the laws of his country. Fashion, and even convenience, soon persuaded the conquerors to assume the more elegant dress of the natives, but they still persisted in the use of their mother-tongue; and their contempt for the Latin schools was applauded by Theodoric himself, who gratified their prejudices, or his own, by declaring, that the child who had trembled at a rod would never dare to look upon a sword. Distress might sometimes provoke the indigent Roman to assume the ferocious manners which were insensibly relinquished by the rich and luxurious Barbarian: but these mutual conversions were not encouraged by the policy of a monarch who perpetuated the separation of the Italians and Goths; reserving the former for the arts of peace, and the latter for the service of war. To accomplish this design, he studied to protect his industrious subjects, and to moderate the violence without enervating the valour of his soldiers, who were maintained for the public defence. They held their lands and benefices

Separation
of the Goths
and Italians.

* Procopius, Gothic. l. i. c. i. Variarum, ii.

as a military stipend at the sound of the trumpet, they were prepared to march under the conduct of their provincial officers; and the whole extent of Italy was distributed into the several quarters of a well-regulated camp. The service of the palace and of the frontiers was performed by choice or by rotation; and each extraordinary fatigue was recompensed by an increase of pay and occasional donatives. Theodoric had convinced his brave companions, that empire must be acquired and defended by the same arts. After his example, they strove to excel in the use, not only of the lance and sword, the instruments of their victories, but of the missile weapons, which they were too much inclined to neglect; and the lively image of war was displayed in the daily exercise and annual reviews of the Gothic cavalry. A firm though gentle discipline imposed the habits of modesty, obedience, and temperance; and the Goths were instructed to spare the people, to reverence the laws, to understand the duties of civil society, and to disclaim the barbarous licence of judicial combat and private revenge.

Among the Barbarians of the West, the victory of Theodoric had spread a general alarm. But as soon as it appeared that he was satisfied with conquest and desirous of peace, terror was changed into respect, and they submitted to a powerful mediation, which was uniformly employed for the best purposes of reconciling their quarrels and civilizing their manners. The ambassadors who resorted to Ravenna from the most distant countries of Europe admired his wisdom, magnificence, and courtesy; and if he sometimes accepted either slaves or arms, white horses or strange animals, the gift of a sun-dial, a water-clock, or a musician, admonished even the princes of Gaul of the superior art and industry of his Italian sub-

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Foreign
policy of
Theodoric.

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jects. His domestic alliances, a wife, two daughters, a sister, and a niece, united the family of Theodoric with the kings of the Franks, the Burgundians, the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Thuringians; and contributed to maintain the harmony, or at least the balance, of the great republic of the West. It is difficult, in the dark forests of Germany and Poland, to pursue the emigrations of the Heruli, a fierce people who disdained the use of armour, and who condemned their widows and aged parents not to survive the loss of their husbands, or the decay of their strength. The king of these savage warriors solicited the friendship of Theodoric, and was elevated to the rank of his son, according to the barbaric rites of a military adoption. From the shores of the Baltic, the Æstians or Livonians laid their offerings of native amber at the feet of a prince, whose fame had excited them to undertake an unknown and dangerous journey of fifteen hundred miles. With the country from whence the Gothic nation derived their origin, he maintained a frequent and friendly correspondence; the Italians were clothed in the rich sables of Sweden; and one of its sovereigns, after a voluntary or reluctant abdication, found a hospitable retreat in the palace of Ravenna. He had reigned over one of the thirteen populous tribes who cultivated a small portion of the great island or peninsula of Scandinavia, to which the vague appellation of Thule has been sometimes applied. That northern region was peopled, or had been explored, as high as the sixty-eighth degree of latitude, where the natives of the polar circle enjoy and lose the presence of the sun at each summer and winter solstice during an equal period of forty days. The long night of his absence or death was the mournful season of distress and anxiety, till the mes-

sengers who had been sent to the mountain tops described the first rays of returning light, and proclaimed to the plain below the festival of his resurrection.

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The life of Theodoric represents the rare and meritorious example of a Barbarian, who sheathed his sword in the pride of victory and the vigour of his age. A reign of three and thirty years was consecrated to the duties of civil government, and the hostilities in which he was sometimes involved were speedily terminated by the conduct of his lieutenants, the discipline of his troops, the arms of his allies, and even by the terror of his name. He reduced, under a strong and regular government, the unprofitable countries of Rhætia, Noricum, Dalmatia, and Pannonia, from the source of the Danube and the territory of the Bavarians*, to the petty kingdom erected by the Gepidæ on the ruins of Sirmium. His prudence could not safely intrust the bulwark of Italy to such feeble and turbulent neighbours; and his justice might claim the lands which they oppressed, either as a part of his kingdom, or as the inheritance of his father. The greatness of a servant who was named perfidious because he was successful, awakened the jealousy of the emperor Anastasius; and a war was kindled on the Dacian frontier, by the protection which the Gothic king, in the vicissitude of human affairs, had granted to one of the descendants of Attila. Sabinian, a general illustrious by his own and father's merit, advanced at the head of ten thousand Romans; and the provisions and arms, which filled a long train of waggons, were distributed to the fiercest of the Bulgarian tribes. But, in the fields of Margus, the eastern powers were defeated by the inferior forces of the Goths and Huns; the flower and

His defensive wars.

* See the *Hist. des Peuples Anciens*, &c. tom. ix. p. 255—273. 396—501. The Count de Buat was French minister at the court of Bavaria; a liberal curiosity prompted his inquiries into the antiquities of the country, and that curiosity was the germ of twelve respectable volumes.

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 XXXII. destroyed ; and such was the temperance with which
 Theodoric had inspired his victorious troops, that as
 their leader had not given the signal of pillage, the
 rich spoils of the enemy lay untouched at their feet*.

His naval Exasperated by this disgrace, the Byzantine court
 armament, despatched two hundred ships and eight thousand
 A. D. 509. men to plunder the sea-coast of Calabria and Apulia ;
 they assaulted the ancient city of Tarentum, inter-
 rupted the trade and agriculture of a happy country,
 and sailed back to the Hellespont, proud of their pi-
 ratrical victory over a people whom they still presumed
 to consider as their *Roman* brethren. Their retreat
 was possibly hastened by the activity of Theodoric ;
 Italy was covered by a fleet of a thousand light ves-
 sels, which he constructed with incredible despatch ;
 and his firm moderation was soon rewarded by a solid
 and honourable peace. He maintained with a power-
 ful hand the balance of the West, till it was at length
 overthrown by the ambition of Clovis ; and although
 unable to assist his rash and unfortunate kinsman, the
 king of the Visigoths, he saved the remains of his
 family and people, and checked the Franks in the
 midst of their victorious career. I am not desirous
 to prolong or repeat this narrative of military events,
 the least interesting of the reign of Theodoric ; and
 shall be content to add, that the Alemanni were pro-
 tected, that an inroad of the Burgundians was severely
 chastised, and that the conquest of Arles and Mar-
 seilles opened a free communication with the Visi-
 goths, who revered him both as their national pro-
 tector, and as the guardian of his grandchild, the
 infant son of Alaric. Under this respectable cha-
 racter, the king of Italy restored the prætorian præ-

* See the Gothic transactions on the Danube and in Illyricum, in Jornandes (c. 58, p. 699), Ennodius (p. 1607—1610), Marcellinus (in Chron. p. 44. 47, 48), and Cassiodorus (in Chron. and Var. iii. 23. 50. iv. 13. vii. 4. 24. viii. 9, 10, 11. 21. ix. 8, 9).

fecture of the Gauls, reformed some abuses in the civil government of Spain, and accepted the annual tribute and apparent submission of its military governor, who wisely refused to trust his person in the palace of Ravenna. The Gothic sovereignty was established from Sicily to the Danube, from Sirmium or Belgrade to the Atlantic Ocean; and the Greeks themselves have acknowledged that Theodoric reigned over the fairest portion of the western empire*.

The union of the Goths and Romans might have fixed for ages the transient happiness of Italy; and the first of nations, a new people of free subjects and enlightened soldiers, might have gradually arisen from the mutual emulation of their respective virtues. But the sublime merit of guiding or seconding such a revolution was not reserved for the reign of Theodoric; he wanted either the genius or the opportunities of a legislator; and while he indulged the Goths in the enjoyment of rude liberty, he servilely copied the institutions, and even the abuses, of the political system which had been framed by Constantine and his successors. From a tender regard to the expiring prejudices of Rome, the Barbarian declined the name, the purple, and the diadem of the emperors; but he assumed, under the hereditary title of king, the whole substance and plenitude of imperial prerogative. His addresses to the eastern throne were respectful and ambiguous; he celebrated in pompous style the harmony of the two republics, applauded his own government as the perfect similitude of a sole and undivided empire, and claimed above the kings of the earth the same pre-eminence which he modestly allowed to the person or rank of Anastasius. The alliance of the East and West was annually declared by the unanimous choice of two consuls; but it should seem that the Italian candidate,

Civil government of Italy according to the Roman laws.

* Theophanes, p. 113.

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who was named by Theodoric, accepted a formal confirmation from the sovereign of Constantinople. The Gothic palace of Ravenna reflected the image of the court of Theodosius or Valentinian. The prætorian præfect, the præfect of Rome, the quæstor, the master of the offices, with the public and patrimonial treasurers, whose functions are painted in gaudy colours by the rhetoric of Cassiodorius, still continued to act as the ministers of state. And the subordinate care of justice and the revenue was delegated to seven consulars, three correctors, and five presidents, who governed the fifteen *regions* of Italy, according to the principles and even the forms of Roman jurisprudence. The violence of the conquerors was abated or eluded by the slow artifice of judicial proceedings; the civil administration, with its honours and emoluments, was confined to the Italians; and the people still preserved their dress and language, their laws and customs, their personal freedom, and two-thirds of their landed property. It had been the object of Augustus to conceal the introduction of monarchy; it was the policy of Theodoric to disguise the reign of a Barbarian. If his subjects were sometimes awakened from this pleasing vision of a Roman government, they derived more substantial comfort from the character of a Gothic prince, who had penetration to discern, and firmness to pursue, his own and the public interest. Theodoric loved the virtues which he possessed, and the talents of which he was destitute. Liberius was promoted to the office of prætorian præfect for his unshaken fidelity to the unfortunate cause of Odoacer. The ministers of Theodoric, Cassiodorius and Boethius, have reflected on his reign the lustre of their genius and learning. More prudent or more fortunate than his colleague, Cassiodorius preserved his own esteem without forfeiting the royal favour; and

after passing thirty years in the honours of the world, he was blessed with an equal term of repose in the devout and studious solitude of Squillace.

As the patron of the republic, it was the interest and duty of the Gothic king to cultivate the affections of the senate and people. The nobles of Rome were flattered by sonorous epithets and formal professions of respect, which had been more justly applied to the merit and authority of their ancestors. The people enjoyed, without fear or danger, the three blessings of a capital, order, plenty, and public amusements. A visible diminution of their numbers may be found even in the measure of liberality; yet Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, poured their tribute of corn into the granaries of Rome; an allowance of bread and meat was distributed to the indigent citizens; and every office was deemed honourable which was consecrated to the care of their health and happiness. The public games, such as a Greek ambassador might politely applaud, exhibited a faint and feeble copy of the magnificence of the Cæsars: yet the musical, the gymnastic, and the pantomime arts, had not totally sunk in oblivion; the wild beasts of Africa still exercised in the amphitheatre the courage and dexterity of the hunters; and the indulgent Goth either patiently tolerated or gently restrained the blue and green factions, whose contests so often filled the circus with clamour, and even with blood. In the seventh year of his peaceful reign, Theodoric visited the old capital of the world; the senate and people advanced in solemn procession to salute a second Trajan, a new Valentinian; and he nobly supported that character by the assurance of a just and legal government, in a discourse which he was not afraid to pronounce in public, and to inscribe on a tablet of brass. Rome, in this august ceremony, shot a last ray of declining glory; and during a re-

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Prosperity
of Rome.

Visit of
Theodoric,
A. D. 500.

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sidence of six months, the fame, the person, and the courteous demeanour of the Gothic king, excited the admiration of the Romans, and he contemplated, with equal curiosity and surprise, the monuments that remained of their ancient greatness. He imprinted the footsteps of a conqueror on the Capitoline hill, and frankly confessed that each day he viewed with fresh wonder the forum of Trajan and his lofty column. The theatre of Pompey appeared, even in its decay, as a huge mountain artificially hollowed and polished, and adorned by human industry; and he vaguely computed, that a river of gold must have been drained to erect the colossal amphitheatre of Titus*. From the mouths of fourteen aqueducts, a pure and copious stream was diffused into every part of the city; among these the Claudian water, which arose at the distance of thirty-eight miles in the Sabine mountains, was conveyed along a gentle though constant declivity of solid arches, till it descended on the summit of the Aventine hill. The long and spacious vaults which had been constructed for the purpose of common sewers subsisted, after twelve centuries, in their pristine strength; and the subterraneous channels have been preferred to all the visible wonders of Rome†. The Gothic kings, so injuriously accused of the ruin of antiquity, were anxious to preserve the monuments of the nation whom they had subdued‡. The royal edicts were framed to prevent the abuses, the neglect, or the depredations of the citizens themselves; and a pro-

* According to the modern prices, the Abbé Barthelemy computes that the brick-work and masonry of the Coliseum would now cost twenty millions of French livres (*Mem. de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxviii. p. 585, 586). How small a part of that stupendous fabric!

† For the aqueducts and cloacæ, see Strabo (*L. v. p. 360*), Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 24), Cassiodorus (*Var. iii. 30, 31. vi. 6*), Procopius (*Goth. l. i. c. 19*), and Nardini (*Roma Antica*, p. 514—522). How such works could be executed by a king of Rome, is yet a problem.

‡ For the Gothic care of the buildings and statues, see Cassiodorus (*Var. i. 21. 25. ii. 34. iv. 30. vii. 6. 13. 15*), and the Valesian Fragment (*p. 721*).

fessed architect, the annual sum of two hundred pounds of gold, twenty-five thousand tiles, and the receipt of customs from the Lucrine port, were assigned for the ordinary repairs of the walls and public edifices. A similar care was extended to the statues of metal or marble of men or animals. The spirit of the horses, which have given a modern name to the Quirinal, was applauded by the Barbarians*; the brazen elephants of the *Via sacra* were diligently restored; the famous heifer of Myron deceived the cattle, as they were driven through the forum of peace; and an officer was created to protect those works of art, which Theodoric considered as the noblest ornament of his kingdom.

After the example of the last emperors, Theodoric Flourishing state of Italy. preferred the residence of Ravenna, where he cultivated an orchard with his own hands. As often as the peace of his kingdom was threatened (for it was never invaded) by the Barbarians, he removed his court to Verona on the northern frontier, and the image of his palace, still extant, on a coin, represents the oldest and most authentic model of Gothic architecture. These two capitals, as well as Pavia, Spoleto, Naples, and the rest of the Italian cities, acquired under his reign the useful or splendid decorations of churches, aqueducts, baths, porticoes, and palaces. But the happiness of the subject was more truly conspicuous in the busy scene of labour and luxury, in the rapid increase and bold enjoyment of national wealth. From the shades of Tibur and Præneste, the Roman senators still retired in the winter-season to the warm sun and salubrious springs of Baia; and their villas, which advanced on solid

* Var. vii. 15. These horses of Monte-Cavallo had been transported from Alexandria to the baths of Constantine (Nardini, p. 188). Their sculpture is disdained by the Abbé Dubos (*Reflexions sur la Poesie et sur la Peinture*, tom. i. section 39), and admired by Winkelman (*Hist. de l' Art*, tom. ii. p. 159).

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moles into the bay of Naples, commanded the various prospect of the sky, the earth, and the water. On the eastern side of the Hadriatic, a new Campania was formed in the fair and fruitful province of Istria, which communicated with the palace of Ravenna by an easy navigation of one hundred miles. The rich productions of Lucania and the adjacent provinces were exchanged at the Marcilian fountain, in a populous fair annually dedicated to trade, intemperance, and superstition. In the solitude of Comum, which had once been animated by the mild genius of Pliny, a transparent bason above sixty miles in length still reflected the rural seats which encompassed the margin of the Larian lake ; and the gradual ascent of the hills was covered by a triple plantation of olives, of vines, and of chestnut trees. Agriculture revived under the shadow of peace, and the number of husbandmen was multiplied by the redemption of captives. The iron mines of Dalmatia, a gold mine in Bruttium, were carefully explored, and the Pomptine marshes, as well as those of Spoleto, were drained and cultivated by private undertakers, whose distant reward must depend on the continuance of the public prosperity. Whenever the seasons were less propitious, the doubtful precautions of forming magazines of corn, fixing the price, and prohibiting the exportation, attested at least the benevolence of the state ; but such was the extraordinary plenty which an industrious people produced from a grateful soil, that a gallon of wine was sometimes sold in Italy for less than three farthings, and a quarter of wheat at about five shillings and sixpence. A country possessed of so many valuable objects of exchange soon attracted the merchants of the world, whose beneficial traffic was encouraged and protected by the liberal spirit of Theodoric. The free intercourse of the provinces by land and water was restored and

extended ; the city gates were never shut either by day or by night ; and the common saying, that a purse of gold might be safely left in the fields, was expressive of the conscious security of the inhabitants.

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A difference of religion is always pernicious and often fatal to the harmony of the prince and people ; the Gothic conqueror had been educated in the profession of Arianism, and Italy was devoutly attached to the Nicene faith. But the persuasion of Theodoric was not infected by zeal, and he adhered to the heresy of his fathers, without condescending to balance the subtile arguments of theological metaphysics. Satisfied with the private toleration of his Arian sectaries, he justly conceived himself to be the guardian of the public worship ; and the Catholics of his dominions acknowledged the peace of the church ; their clergy, according to the degrees of rank or merit, were honourably entertained in the palace of Theodoric ; he esteemed the living sanctity of Cæsarius and Epiphanius, the orthodox bishops of Arles and Pavia ; and presented a decent offering on the tomb of St. Peter. His favourite Goths, and even his mother, were permitted to retain or embrace the Athanasian faith, and his long reign could not afford the example of an Italian Catholic, who, either from choice or compulsion, had deviated into the religion of the conqueror. The people, and the Barbarians themselves, were edified by the pomp and order of religious worship ; the magistrates were instructed to defend the just immunities of ecclesiastical persons and possessions ; the bishops held their synods, the metropolitans exercised their jurisdiction, and the privileges of sanctuary were maintained or moderated according to the spirit of the Roman jurisprudence. With the protection, Theodoric assumed the legal supremacy of the church ; and his firm

Theodoric
an Arian.

His tolera-
tion of the
Catholics.

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administration restored or extended some useful prerogatives which had been neglected by the feeble emperors of the West. He was not ignorant of the dignity and importance of the Roman pontiff, to whom the venerable name of POPE was now appropriated. The peace or the revolt of Italy might depend on the character of a wealthy and popular bishop, who claimed such ample dominion both in heaven and earth; who had been declared in a numerous synod to be pure from all sin, and exempt from all judgment. When the chair of St. Peter was disputed by Symmachus and Laurence, they appeared at his summons before the tribunal of an Arian monarch, and he confirmed the election of the most worthy or the most obsequious candidate. At the end of his life, in a moment of jealousy and resentment, he prevented the choice of the Romans, by nominating a pope in the palace of Ravenna. The danger and furious contests of a schism were mildly restrained, and the last decree of the senate was enacted to extinguish, if it were possible, the scandalous venality of the papal elections*.

Vices of
his govern-
ment.

I have descanted with pleasure on the fortunate condition of Italy; but our fancy must not hastily conceive that the golden age of the poets, a race of men without vice or misery, was realised under the Gothic conquest. The fair prospect was sometimes overcast with clouds; the wisdom of Theodoric might be deceived, his power might be resisted, and the declining age of the monarch was sullied with popular hatred and patrician blood. In the first insolence of victory, he had been tempted to deprive the whole party of Odoacer of the civil and even the natural rights of society; a tax unseasonably imposed after the calamities of war, would have crushed the rising

* See Cassiodorus (Var. viii. 15. ix. 15, 16), Anastasius (in Symmacho, p. 31), and the xviiith Annotation of Mascou.

agriculture of Liguria; a rigid pre-emption of corn, which was intended for the public relief, must have aggravated the distress of Campania. These dangerous projects were defeated by the virtue and eloquence of Epiphanius and Boethius, who, in the presence of Theodoric himself, successfully pleaded the cause of the people: but if the royal ear was open to the voice of truth, a saint and a philosopher are not always to be found at the ear of kings. The privileges of rank, or office, or favour, were too frequently abused by Italian fraud and Gothic violence, and the avarice of the king's nephew was publicly exposed, at first by the usurpation, and afterwards by the restitution of the estates which he had unjustly extorted from his Tuscan neighbours. Two hundred thousand Barbarians, formidable even to their master, were seated in the heart of Italy; they indignantly supported the restraints of peace and discipline; the disorders of their march were always felt and sometimes compensated; and where it was dangerous to punish, it might be prudent to dissemble, the sallies of their native fierceness. When the indulgence of Theodoric had remitted two-thirds of the Ligurian tribute, he condescended to explain the difficulties of his situation, and to lament the heavy though inevitable burdens which he imposed on his subjects for their own defence. These ungrateful subjects could never be cordially reconciled to the origin, the religion, or even the virtues of the Gothic conqueror; past calamities were forgotten, and the sense or suspicion of injuries was rendered still more exquisite by the present felicity of the times.

Even the religious toleration which Theodoric had the glory of introducing into the Christian world, was painful and offensive to the orthodox zeal of the Italians. They respected the armed heresy of the

He is provoked to persecute the Catholics.

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Goths ; but their pious rage was safely pointed against the rich and defenceless Jews, who had formed their establishments at Naples, Rome, Ravenna, Milan, and Genoa, for the benefit of trade, and under the sanction of the laws. Their persons were insulted, their effects were pillaged, and their synagogues were burnt by the mad populace of Ravenna and Rome, inflamed, as it should seem, by the most frivolous or extravagant pretences. The government which could neglect, would have deserved, such an outrage. A legal inquiry was instantly directed ; and as the authors of the tumult had escaped in the crowd, the whole community was condemned to repair the damage ; and the obstinate bigots who refused their contributions were whipped through the streets by the hand of the executioner. At the close of a glorious life, the king of Italy discovered that he had excited the hatred of a people whose happiness he had so assiduously laboured to promote ; and his mind was soured by indignation, jealousy, and the bitterness of unrequited love. The Gothic conqueror condescended to disarm the unwarlike natives of Italy, interdicting all weapons of offence, and excepting only a small knife for domestic use. The deliverer of Rome was accused of conspiring with the vilest informers against the lives of senators whom he suspected of a secret and treasonable correspondence with the Byzantine court. After the death of Anastasius, the diadem had been placed on the head of a feeble old man ; but the powers of government were assumed by his nephew Justinian, who already meditated the extirpation of heresy, and the conquest of Italy and Africa. A rigorous law which was published at Constantinople, to reduce the Arians by the dread of punishment within the pale of the church, awakened the just resentment of Theodoric, who claimed for his distressed brethren

of the East the same indulgence which he had so long granted to the Catholics of his dominions. At his stern command, the Roman pontiff, with four *illustrious* senators, embarked on an embassy, of which he must have alike dreaded the failure or the success. The singular veneration shown to the first pope who had visited Constantinople was punished as a crime by his jealous monarch; the artful or peremptory refusal of the Byzantine court might excuse an equal, and would provoke a larger, measure of retaliation; and a mandate was prepared in Italy, to prohibit, after a stated day, the exercise of the Catholic worship. By the bigotry of his subjects and enemies, the most tolerant of princes was driven to the brink of persecution; and the life of Theodoric was too long, since he lived to condemn the virtue of Boethius and Symmachus*.

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The senator Boethius† is the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman. As a wealthy orphan, he inherited the patrimony and honours of the Anician family, a name ambitiously assumed by the kings and emperors of the age; and the appellation of Manlius asserted his genuine or fabulous descent from a race of consuls and dictators, who had repulsed the Gauls from the Capitol, and sacrificed their sons to the discipline of the republic. In the youth of Boethius, the studies of Rome were not totally abandoned; a Virgil‡ is now extant, corrected by the hand of a

Character,
studies,
and hon-
ours of
Boethius.

* I have laboured to extract a rational narrative from the dark, concise, and various hints of the Valesian Fragment (p. 722, 723, 724), Theophanes (p. 145), Anastasius (in Johanne, p. 35), and the Hist. Miscella (p. 103. edit. Muratori). A gentle pressure and paraphrase of their words is no violence. Consult likewise Muratori (Annali d'Italia, tom. iv. p. 471—478), with the Annals and Breviary (tom. i. 259—263) of the two Pagi's, the uncle and the nephew.

† Le Clerc has composed a critical and philosophical life of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (Bibliot. Choisie, tom. xvi. p. 168—275), and both Tiraboschi (tom. iii.) and Fabricius (Bibliot. Latin.) may be usefully consulted. The date of his birth may be placed about the year 470, and his death in 524, in a premature old age (Consol. Phil. Metrica, i. p. 5).

‡ For the age and value of this MS. now in the Medicean library at Florence, see the Cenotaphia Pisana (p. 430—447) of Cardinal Noris.

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consul ; and the professors of grammar, rhetoric, and jurisprudence, were maintained in their privileges and pensions, by the liberality of the Goths. But the erudition of the Latin language was insufficient to satiate his ardent curiosity ; and Boethius is said to have employed eighteen laborious years in the schools of Athens, which were supported by the zeal, the learning, and the diligence of Proclus and his disciples. The reason and piety of their Roman pupil were fortunately saved from the contagion of mystery and magic, which polluted the groves of the academy ; but he imbibed the spirit, and imitated the method of his dead and living masters, who attempted to reconcile the strong and subtle sense of Aristotle with the devout contemplation and sublime fancy of Plato. After his return to Rome, and his marriage with the daughter of his friend, the patrician Symmachus, Boethius still continued, in a palace of ivory and marble, to prosecute the same studies. The church was edified by his profound defence of the orthodox creed against the Arian, the Eutychian, and the Nestorian heresies. For the benefit of his Latin readers, his genius submitted to teach the first elements of the arts and sciences of Greece. The geometry of Euclid, the music of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato, and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of Porphyry, were translated and illustrated by the indefatigable pen of the Roman senator. And he alone was esteemed capable of describing the wonders of art, a sun-dial, a water-clock, or a sphere which represented the motions of the planets. From these abstruse speculations, Boethius stooped, or to speak more truly, he rose to the social duties of public and private life : the indigent were relieved by his liberality ; and his eloquence, which flattery might compare to the voice of Demosthenes or Cicero, was uni-

formly exerted in the cause of innocence and humanity. Such conspicuous merit was felt and rewarded by a discerning prince; the dignity of Boethius was adorned with the titles of consul and patrician, and his talents were usefully employed in the important station of master of the offices. Notwithstanding the equal claims of the East and West, his two sons were created, in their tender youth, the consuls of the same year. On the memorable day of their inauguration, they proceeded in solemn pomp from their palace to the forum, amidst the applause of the senate and people; and their joyful father, the true consul of Rome, after pronouncing an oration in the praise of his royal benefactor, distributed a triumphal largess in the games of the circus. Prosperous in his fame and fortunes, in his public honours and private alliances, in the cultivation of science and the consciousness of virtue, Boethius might have been styled happy, if that precarious epithet could be safely applied before the last term of the life of man.

A philosopher, liberal of his wealth and parsimonious of his time, might be insensible to the common allurements of ambition, the thirst of gold and employment. And some credit may be due to the asseveration of Boethius, that he had reluctantly obeyed the divine Plato, who enjoins every virtuous citizen to rescue the state from the usurpation of vice and ignorance. For the integrity of his public conduct he appeals to the memory of his country. His authority had restrained the pride and oppression of the royal officers, and his eloquence had delivered Paulianus from the dogs of the palace. He had always pitied, and often relieved, the distress of the provincials, whose fortunes were exhausted by public and private rapine; and Boethius alone had courage to oppose the tyranny of the Barbarians, elated by conquest, excited by avarice, and, as he complains,

His patriotism.

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He is ac-
cused of
treason.

encouraged by impunity. In these honourable contests, his spirit soared above the consideration of danger, and perhaps of prudence; and we may learn from the example of Cato, that a character of pure and inflexible virtue is the most apt to be misled by prejudice, to be heated by enthusiasm, and to confound private enmities with public justice. The disciple of Plato might exaggerate the infirmities of nature, and the imperfections of society; and the mildest form of a Gothic kingdom, even the weight of allegiance and gratitude, must be insupportable to the free spirit of a Roman patriot. But the favour and fidelity of Boethius declined in just proportion with the public happiness; and an unworthy colleague was imposed, to divide and control the power of the master of the offices. In the last gloomy season of Theodoric, he indignantly felt that he was a slave; but as his master had only power over his life, he stood without arms and without fear against the face of an angry Barbarian, who had been provoked to believe that the safety of the senate was incompatible with his own. The senator Albinus was accused and already convicted on the presumption of *hoping*, as it was said, the liberty of Rome. "If Albinus be criminal," exclaimed the orator, "the senate and myself are all guilty of the same crime. If we are innocent, Albinus is equally entitled to the protection of the laws." These laws might not have punished the simple and barren wish of an unattainable blessing; but they would have shown less indulgence to the rash confession of Boethius, that, had he known of a conspiracy, the tyrant never should. The advocate of Albinus was soon involved in the danger and perhaps the guilt of his client; their signature (which they denied as a forgery) was affixed to the original address, inviting the emperor to deliver Italy from the Goths; and three witnesses

of honourable rank, perhaps of infamous reputation, attested the treasonable designs of the Roman patrician. Yet his innocence must be presumed, since he was deprived by Theodoric of the means of justification, and rigorously confined in the tower of Pavia, while the senate, at the distance of five hundred miles, pronounced a sentence of confiscation and death against the most illustrious of its members. At the command of the Barbarians, the occult science of a philosopher was stigmatized with the names of sacrilege and magic. A devout and dutiful attachment to the senate was condemned as criminal by the trembling voices of the senators themselves; and their ingratitude deserved the wish or prediction of Boethius, that, after him, none should be found guilty of the same offence.

While Boethius, oppressed with fetters, expected each moment the sentence or the stroke of death, he composed in the tower of Pavia the *Consolation of Philosophy*; a golden volume not unworthy of the leisure of Plato or Tully, but which claims incomparable merit from the barbarism of the times and the situation of the author. The celestial guide whom he had so long invoked at Rome and Athens now condescended to illumine his dungeon, to revive his courage, and to pour into his wounds her salutary balm. She taught him to compare his long prosperity and his recent distress, and to conceive new hopes from the inconstancy of fortune. Reason had informed him of the precarious condition of her gifts; experience had satisfied him of their real value; he had enjoyed them without guilt; he might resign them without a sigh, and calmly disdain the impotent malice of his enemies, who had left him happiness, since they had left him virtue. From the earth, Boethius ascended to heaven in search of the SUPREME GOOD; explored the metaphysical labyrinth

His imprisonment
and death,
A. D. 524.

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of chance and destiny, of prescience and free will, of time and eternity ; and generously attempted to reconcile the perfect attributes of the Deity, with the apparent disorders of his moral and physical government. Such topics of consolation, so obvious, so vague, or so abstruse, are ineffectual to subdue the feelings of human nature. Yet the sense of misfortune may be diverted by the labour of thought ; and the sage who could artfully combine in the same work the various riches of philosophy, poetry, and eloquence, must already have possessed the intrepid calmness, which he affected to seek. Suspense, the worst of evils, was at length determined by the ministers of death, who executed, and perhaps exceeded, the inhuman mandate of Theodoric. A strong cord was fastened round the head of Boethius, and forcibly tightened, till his eyes almost started from their sockets ; and some mercy may be discovered in the milder torture of beating him with clubs till he expired. But his genius survived to diffuse a ray of knowledge over the darkest ages of the Latin world ; the writings of the philosopher were translated by the most glorious of the English kings, and the third emperor of the name of Otho removed to a more honourable tomb the bones of a Catholic saint, who, from his Arian persecutors, had acquired the honours of martyrdom, and the fame of miracles. In the last hours of Boethius, he derived some comfort from the safety of his two sons, of his wife, and of his father-in-law, the venerable Symmachus. But the grief of Symmachus was indiscreet, and perhaps disrespectful : he had presumed to lament, he might dare to revenge, the death of an injured friend. He was dragged in chains from Rome to the palace of Ravenna ; and the suspicions of Theodoric could only be appeased by the blood of an innocent and aged senator.

Death of
Symmachus,
A. D. 525.

Remorse
and death

Humanity will be disposed to encourage any report

which testifies the jurisdiction of conscience and the remorse of kings; and philosophy is not ignorant that the most horrid spectres are sometimes created by the powers of a disordered fancy, and the weakness of a distempered body. After a life of virtue and glory, Theodoric was now descending with shame and guilt into the grave: his mind was humbled by the contrast of the past, and justly alarmed by the invisible terrors of futurity. One evening, as it is related, when the head of a large fish was served on the royal table, he suddenly exclaimed, that he beheld the angry countenance of Symmachus, his eyes glaring fury and revenge, and his mouth armed with long sharp teeth, which threatened to devour him. The monarch instantly retired to his chamber, and, as he lay, trembling with aguish cold, under a weight of bed-clothes, he expressed in broken murmurs to his physician Elpidius, his deep repentance for the murders of Boethius and Symmachus. His malady increased, and after a dysentery which continued three days, he expired in the palace of Ravenna, in the thirty-third, or, if we compute from the invasion of Italy, in the thirty-seventh year of his reign. Conscious of his approaching end, he divided his treasures and provinces between his two grandsons, and fixed the Rhone as their common boundary. Amalaric was restored to the throne of Spain. Italy, with all the conquests of the Ostrogoths, was bequeathed to Athalaric; whose age did not exceed ten years, but who was cherished as the last male offspring of the line of Amali, by the short-lived marriage of his mother Amalasuntha with a royal fugitive of the same blood. In the presence of the dying monarch, the Gothic chiefs and Italian magistrates mutually engaged their faith and loyalty to the young prince, and to his guardian mother; and received in the same awful moment his last salutary advice, to main-

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of Theo-
doric,
A. D. 526,
August 30.

CHAP. tain the laws, to love the senate and people of Rome,
XXXII. and to cultivate with decent reverence the friendship
of the emperor. The monument of Theodoric was
erected by his daughter Amalasuntha, in a conspicuous situation, which commanded the city of Ravenna, the harbour, and the adjacent coast. A chapel of a circular form, thirty feet in diameter, is crowned by a dome of one entire piece of granite: from the centre of the dome, four columns arose, which supported, in a vase of porphyry, the remains of the Gothic king, surrounded by the brazen statues of the twelve apostles*.

* Anonym. Vales. p. 724. Agnellus de Vitis Pont. Raven. in Muratori Script. Rerum Ital. tom. ii. P. i. p. 67. Alberti Descriptione d'Italia, p. 311.

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Elevation of Justin the Elder.—Reign of Justinian:—

I. The Empress Theodora.—II. Factions of the Circus, and Sedition of Constantinople.—III. Trade and Manufacture of Silk.—IV. Finances and Taxes.—V. Edifices of Justinian.—Church of St. Sophia.—Fortifications and Frontiers of the Eastern Empire.—Abolition of the Schools of Athens, and the Consulship of Rome.

THE emperor Justinian was born near the ruins of ^{CHAP. XXXIII.} Sardica (the modern Sophia), of an obscure race * of Barbarians, the inhabitants of a wild and desolate country, to which the names of Dardania, of Dacia, and of Bulgaria, have been successively applied. His elevation was prepared by the adventurous spirit of his uncle Justin, who, with two other peasants of the same village, deserted for the profession of arms the more useful employment of husbandmen or shepherds †. On foot, with a scanty provision of biscuit in their knapsacks, the three youths followed the high-road of Constantinople, and were soon enrolled, for their strength and stature, among the guards of the emperor Leo. Under the two succeeding reigns, the fortunate peasant emerged to wealth and honours; escaping from some dangers which threatened his life. His long and laudable service in the Isaurian and Persian wars would not have preserved from oblivion the name of Justin; yet they might warrant the mi-

Birth of the emperor Justinian, A. D. 482, May 5—
or A. D. 483, May 11.

* The names of these Dardanian peasants are Gothic, and almost English: *Justinian* is a translation of *uprauda* (*upright*); his father *Sabatus* (in Græco-barbarous language *stipes*) was styled in his village *Istock* (*Stock*); his mother *Bigleniza* was softened into *Vigilantia*.

† See the anecdotes of Procopius (c. 6) with the notes of N. Alemannus. The satirist would not have sunk, in the vague and decent appellation of γιωργος, the βωκολος and τυφορσος of Zonaras. Yet why are those names disgraceful?—and what German baron would not be proud to descend from the Eumæus of the Odyssey?

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Elevation
and reign of
his uncle
Justin I.
A. D. 518,
July 10;
A. D. 527,
April 1—
or Aug. 1.

litary promotion, which in the course of fifty years he gradually obtained; the rank of tribune, of count, and of general, the dignity of senator, and the command of the guards, who obeyed him as their chief, at the important crisis when the emperor Anastasius was removed from the world. The powerful kinsmen whom he had raised and enriched were excluded from the throne; and the eunuch Amantius, who reigned in the palace, had secretly resolved to fix the diadem on the head of the most obsequious of his creatures. A liberal donative, to conciliate the suffrage of the guards, was intrusted for that purpose in the hands of their commander. But these weighty arguments were treacherously employed by Justin in his own favour; and as no competitor presumed to appear, the Dacian peasant was invested with the purple, by the unanimous consent of the soldiers who knew him to be brave and gentle, of the clergy and people who believed him to be orthodox, and of the provincials who yielded a blind and implicit submission to the will of the capital. The elder Justin, as he is distinguished from another emperor of the same family and name, ascended the Byzantine throne at the age of sixty-eight years; and, had he been left to his own guidance, every moment of a nine years' reign must have exposed to his subjects the impropriety of their choice. His ignorance was similar to that of Theodoric; and it is remarkable, that in an age not destitute of learning, two contemporary monarchs had never been instructed in the knowledge of the alphabet. But the genius of Justin was far inferior to that of the Gothic king: the experience of a soldier had not qualified him for the government of an empire; and, though personally brave, the consciousness of his own weakness was naturally attended with doubt, distrust, and political apprehension. But the official business of the state was diligently and

faithfully transacted by the quæstor Proclus*; and the aged emperor adopted the talents and ambition of his nephew Justinian, an aspiring youth, whom his uncle had drawn from the rustic solitude of Dacia, and educated at Constantinople, as the heir of his private fortune, and at length of the Eastern empire.

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Since the eunuch Amantius had been defrauded of his money, it became necessary to deprive him of his life. The task was easily accomplished by the charge of a real or fictitious conspiracy. Amantius lost his head; three of his companions, the first domestics of the palace, were punished either with death or exile; and their unfortunate candidate for the purple was cast into a deep dungeon, overwhelmed with stones, and ignominiously thrown, without burial, into the sea. The ruin of Vitalian was a work of more difficulty and danger. That Gothic chief had rendered himself popular by the civil war which he boldly waged against Anastasius for the defence of the orthodox faith, and after the conclusion of an advantageous treaty, he still remained in the neighbourhood of Constantinople at the head of a formidable and victorious army of Barbarians. By the frail security of oaths, he was tempted to relinquish this advantageous situation, and to trust his person within the walls of a city, whose inhabitants, particularly the *blue* faction, were artfully incensed against him by the remembrance even of his pious hostilities. The emperor and his nephew embraced him as the faithful and worthy champion of the church and state; and gratefully adorned their favourite with the titles of consul and general; but in the seventh month of his consulship, Vitalian was stabbed with seventeen wounds at the royal banquet;

Adoption
and succe-
sion of
Justinian,
A. D. 520
—527.

* His virtues are praised by Procopius (Persic. l. i. c. 11). The quæstor Proclus was the friend of Justinian, and the enemy of every other adoption.

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and Justinian, who inherited the spoil, was accused as the assassin of a spiritual brother, to whom he had recently pledged his faith in the participation of the Christian mysteries. After the fall of his rival, he was promoted, without any claim of military service, to the office of master-general of the Eastern armies, whom it was his duty to lead into the field against the public enemy. But, in the pursuit of fame, Justinian might have lost his present dominion over the age and weakness of his uncle; and instead of acquiring by Scythian or Persian trophies the applause of his countrymen, the prudent warrior solicited their favour in the churches, the circus, and the senate, of Constantinople. The Catholics were attached to the nephew of Justin, who, between the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, trod the path of inflexible orthodoxy. In the first days of the new reign, he prompted and gratified the popular enthusiasm against the memory of the deceased emperor. After a schism of thirty-four years, he reconciled the proud and angry spirit of the Roman pontiff, and spread among the Latins a favourable report of his pious respect for the apostolic see. The thrones of the East were filled with Catholic bishops devoted to his interest, the clergy and the monks were gained by his liberality, and the people were taught to pray for their future sovereign, the hope and pillar of the true religion. The magnificence of Justinian was displayed in the superior pomp of his public spectacles, an object sacred and important in the eyes of the multitude. The expense of his consulship was esteemed at two hundred and eighty-eight thousand pieces of gold; twenty lions, and thirty leopards, were produced at the same time in the amphitheatre, and a numerous train of horses, with their rich trappings, was bestowed as an extraordinary gift on the victorious charioteers of the circus. While he indulged

the people of Constantinople, and received the addresses of foreign kings, the nephew of Justin assiduously cultivated the friendship of the senate. That venerable name seemed to qualify its members to declare the sense of the nation, and to regulate the succession of the Imperial throne: the feeble Anastasius had permitted the vigour of government to degenerate into the form or substance of an aristocracy; and the military officers who had obtained the senatorial rank were followed by their domestic guards, a band of veterans, whose arms or acclamations might fix in a tumultuous moment the diadem of the East. The treasures of the state were lavished to procure the voices of the senators, and their unanimous wish, that he would be pleased to adopt Justinian for his colleague, was communicated to the emperor. But this request, which too clearly admonished him of his approaching end, was unwelcome to the jealous temper of an aged monarch, desirous to retain the power which he was incapable of exercising; and Justin, holding his purple with both his hands, advised them to prefer, since an election was so profitable, some older candidate. Notwithstanding this reproach, the senate proceeded to decorate Justinian with the royal epithet of *nobilissimus*; and their decree was ratified by the affection or the fears of his uncle. After some time the languor of mind and body, to which he was reduced by an incurable wound in his thigh, indispensably required the aid of a guardian. He summoned the patriarch and senators; and in their presence solemnly placed the diadem on the head of his nephew, who was conducted from the palace to the circus, and saluted by the loud and joyful applause of the people. The life of Justin was prolonged about four months, but from the instant of this ceremony, he was considered

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The reign of Justinian, A. D. 527, April 1; A. D. 565, Nov. 14.

Character and histories of Procopius.

From his elevation to his death, Justinian governed the Roman empire thirty-eight years, seven months, and thirteen days. The events of his reign, which excite our curious attention by their number, variety, and importance, are diligently related by the secretary of Belisarius, a rhetorician whom eloquence had promoted to the rank of senator and præfect of Constantinople. According to the vicissitudes of courage or servitude, of favour or disgrace, Procopius successively composed the *history*, the *panegyric*, and the *satire* of his own times. The eight books of the Persian, Vandalic, and Gothic wars†, which are continued in the five books of Agathias, deserve our esteem as a laborious and successful imitation of the Attic, or at least of the Asiatic writers of ancient Greece. His facts are collected from the personal experience and free conversation of a soldier, a statesman, and a traveller; his style continually aspires, and often attains to the merit of strength and elegance; his reflections, more especially in the speeches, which he too frequently inserts, contain a rich fund of political knowledge; and the historian, excited by the generous ambition of pleasing and instructing posterity, appears to disdain the prejudices of the people, and the flattery of courts. The writings of

* The reign of the elder Justin may be found in the three Chronicles of Marcellinus, Victor, and John Malala (tom. ii. p. 130—150), the last of whom (in spite of Hody, Prolegom. No. 14. 39, edit. Oxon.) lived soon after Justinian (Jortin's Remarks, &c. vol. iv. p. 383), in the Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius (l. iv. c. 1, 2, 3. 9), and the Excerpta of Theodorus (Lector. No. 37), and in Cedrenus (p. 362—366), and Zonaras (l. xiv. p. 58—61), who may pass for an original.

† In the seven first books, two Persian, two Vandalic, and three Gothic, Procopius has borrowed from Appian the division of provinces and wars: the viiith book, though it bears the name of Gothic, is a miscellaneous and general supplement down to the spring of the year 553, from whence it is continued by Agathias till 559. (Pagl, Critica, A. D. 579, No. 5).

Procopius were read and applauded by his contemporaries*; but, although he respectfully laid them at the foot of the throne, the pride of Justinian must have been wounded by the praise of a hero, who perpetually eclipses the glory of his inactive sovereign. The conscious dignity of independence was subdued by the hopes and fears of a slave; and the secretary of Belisarius laboured for pardon and reward in the six books of the Imperial *edifices*. He had dexterously chosen a subject of apparent splendour, in which he could loudly celebrate the genius, the magnificence, and the piety of a prince, who, both as a conqueror and legislator, had surpassed the puerile virtues of Themistocles and Cyrus. Disappointment might urge the flatterer to secret revenge; and the first glance of favour might again tempt him to suspend and suppress a libel, in which the Roman Cyrus is degraded into an odious and contemptible tyrant, in which both the emperor and his consort Theodora are seriously represented as two dæmons, who had assumed a human form for the destruction of mankind. Such base inconsistency must doubtless sully the reputation, and detract from the credit, of Procopius: yet, after the venom of his malignity has been suffered to exhale, the residue of the *anecdotes*, even the most disgraceful facts, some of which had been tenderly hinted in his public history, are established by their internal evidence, or the authentic monuments of the times. From these various materials, I shall now proceed to describe the reign of Justinian, which will deserve and occupy an ample space. The present chapter will explain the elevation and character of Theodora, the factions of the circus, and the peaceful administration of the sovereign of the East. In the three succeeding chapters,

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Division of
the reign of
Justinian.

* Agathias in *Præfat.* p. 7, 8. l. iv. p. 137. Evagrius, l. iv. c. 12. See likewise Photius, cod. lxxiii. p. 65.

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I shall relate the wars of Justinian which achieved the conquest of Africa and Italy ; and I shall follow the victories of Belisarius and Narses, without disguising the vanity of their triumphs, or the hostile virtue of the Persian and Gothic heroes. The series of this and the following volume will embrace the jurisprudence and theology of the emperor ; the controversies and sects which still divide the Oriental church ; the reformation of the Roman law, which is obeyed or respected by the nations of modern Europe.

Birth and
vices of the
empress
Theodora.

I. In the exercise of supreme power, the first act of Justinian was to divide it with the woman whom he loved, the famous Theodora*, whose strange elevation cannot be applauded as the triumph of female virtue. Under the reign of Anastatius, the care of the wild beasts maintained by the green faction of Constantinople, was intrusted to Acacius, a native of the isle of Cyprus, who, from his employment, was surnamed the master of the bears. This honourable office was given after his death to another candidate, notwithstanding the diligence of his widow, who had already provided a husband and a successor. Acacius had left three daughters, Comito, THEODORA, and Anastasia, the eldest of whom did not then exceed the age of seven years. On a solemn festival, these helpless orphans were sent by their distressed and indignant mother, in the garb of suppliants, into the midst of the theatre : the green faction received them with contempt, the blues with compassion ; and this difference, which sunk deep into the mind of Theodora, was felt long afterwards in the administration of the empire. As they improved in age and beauty, the three sisters were successively devoted to the pub-

* For the life and manners of the empress Theodora, see the Anecdotes ; more especially c. 1—5. 9, 10—15, 16, 17, with the learned notes of Alemanus—a reference which is always implied.

lic and private pleasures of the Byzantine people ; and Theodora, after following Comito on the stage, in the dress of a slave, with a stool on her head, was at length permitted to exercise her independent talents. She neither danced, nor sung, nor played on the flute ; her skill was confined to the pantomime arts ; she excelled in buffoon characters, and as often as the comedian swelled her cheeks, and complained, with a ridiculous tone and gesture, of the blows that were inflicted, the whole theatre of Constantinople resounded with laughter and applause. The beauty of Theodora was the subject of more flattering praise. Her features were delicate and regular ; her complexion, though somewhat pale, was tinged with a natural colour ; every sensation was instantly expressed by the vivacity of her eyes ; her easy motions displayed the graces of a small but elegant figure ; and either love or adulation might proclaim, that painting and poetry were incapable of delineating the matchless excellence of her form. But her venal charms were abandoned to a promiscuous crowd of citizens and strangers, of every rank, and of every profession ; and when she passed through the streets, her presence was avoided by all who wished to escape either the scandal or the temptation. The satirical historian has not blushed to describe the scenes which Theodora was not ashamed to exhibit in the theatre. After reigning for some time, the delight and contempt of the capital, she condescended to accompany Ecebolus, a native of Tyre, who had obtained the government of the African Pentapolis. But this union was frail and transient : Ecebolus soon rejected an expensive or faithless concubine ; she was reduced at Alexandria to extreme distress ; and in her laborious return to Constantinople, every city of the East had the fair Cyprian, yet once only she became a mother. The infant was saved and educated

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in Arabia, by his father, who imparted to him on his death-bed, that he was the son of an empress. Filled with ambitious hopes, the unsuspecting youth immediately hastened to the palace of Constantinople, and was admitted to the presence of his mother. As he was never more seen, even after the decease of Theodora, she deserves the foul imputation of extinguishing with his life a secret so offensive to her Imperial virtue.

Her marriage with
Justinian.

In the most abject state of her fortune and reputation, some vision, either of sleep or of fancy, had whispered to Theodora the pleasing assurance that she was destined to become the spouse of a potent monarch. Conscious of her approaching greatness, she returned from Paphlagonia to Constantinople; assumed, like a skilful actress, a more decent character; relieved her poverty by the laudable industry of spinning wool; and affected a life of chastity and solitude in a small house, which she afterwards changed into a magnificent temple. Her beauty, assisted by art or accident, soon attracted, captivated, and fixed, the patrician Justinian, who already reigned with absolute sway under the name of his uncle. When his first transports had subsided, she still maintained the same ascendant over his mind, by the more solid merit of temper and understanding. Justinian delighted to ennoble and enrich the object of his affection; the treasures of the East were poured at her feet, and the nephew of Justin was determined, perhaps by religious scruples, to bestow on his concubine the sacred and legal character of a wife. But the laws of Rome expressly prohibited the marriage of a senator with any female who had been dishonoured by a servile origin or theatrical profession: the empress Lupicina, or Euphemia, a Barbarian of rustic manners, but of irreproachable virtue, refused to accept a prostitute for her niece; and even Vigi-

lantia, the superstitious mother of Justinian, though she acknowledged the wit and beauty of Theodora, was seriously apprehensive, lest the levity and arrogance of that artful paramour might corrupt the piety and happiness of her son. These obstacles were removed by the inflexible constancy of Justinian. He patiently expected the death of the empress; he despised the tears of his mother, who soon sunk under the weight of her affliction; and a law was promulgated in the name of the emperor Justin, which abolished the rigid jurisprudence of antiquity. A glorious repentance (the words of the edict) was left open for the unhappy females who had prostituted their persons on the theatre, and they were permitted to contract a legal union with the most illustrious of the Romans. This indulgence was speedily followed by the solemn nuptials of Justinian and Theodora; her dignity was gradually exalted with that of her lover; and, as soon as Justin had invested his nephew with the purple, the patriarch of Constantinople placed the diadem on the heads of the emperor and empress of the East. But the usual honours which the severity of Roman manners had allowed to the wives of princes could not satisfy either the ambition of Theodora or the fondness of Justinian. He seated her on the throne as an equal and independent colleague in the sovereignty of the empire, and an oath of allegiance was imposed on the governors of the provinces in the joint names of Justinian and Theodora. The Eastern world fell prostrate before the genius and fortune of the daughter of Acacius. The prostitute who, in the presence of innumerable spectators, had polluted the theatre of Constantinople, was adored as a queen in the same city, by magistrates, bishops, generals, and captive monarchs.

From a motive of shame or contempt, she often

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declined the servile homage of the multitude, escaped from the odious light of the capital, and passed the greatest part of the year in the palaces and gardens which were pleasantly seated on the sea-coast of the Propontis and the Bosphorus. Her private hours were devoted to the prudent as well as grateful care of her beauty, the luxury of the bath and table, and the long slumber of the evening and the morning. Her secret apartments were occupied by the favourite women and eunuchs, whose interests and passions she indulged at the expense of justice; the most illustrious personages of the state were crowded into a dark and sultry antechamber, and when at last, after tedious attendance, they were admitted to kiss the feet of Theodora, they experienced, as her humour might suggest, the silent arrogance of an empress, or the capricious levity of a comedian. Her rapacious avarice to accumulate an immense treasure may be excused by the apprehension of her husband's death, which could leave no alternative between ruin and the throne; and fear as well as ambition might exasperate Theodora against two generals, who during a malady of the emperor had rashly declared that they were not disposed to acquiesce in the choice of the capital. But the reproach of cruelty, so repugnant even to her softer vices, has left an indelible stain on the memory of Theodora. Her numerous spies observed, and zealously reported, every action, or word, or look, injurious to their royal mistress. Whomsoever they accused were cast into her peculiar prisons, inaccessible to the inquiries of justice; and it was rumoured, that the torture of the rack, or scourge, had been inflicted in the presence of a female tyrant, insensible to the voice of prayer or of pity. Some of these unhappy victims perished in deep unwholesome dungeons, while others were permitted, after the loss of their limbs, their reason, or their

fortune, to appear in the world the living monuments of her vengeance, which was commonly extended to the children of those whom she had suspected or injured. The senator or bishop, whose death or exile Theodora had pronounced, was delivered to a trusty messenger, and his diligence was quickened by a menace from her own mouth.

The name of Theodora was introduced, with equal honour, in all the pious and charitable foundations of Justinian; and the most benevolent institution of his reign may be ascribed to the sympathy of the empress for her less fortunate sisters, who had been seduced or compelled to embrace the trade of prostitution. A palace, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, was converted into a stately and spacious monastery, and a liberal maintenance was assigned to five hundred women, who had been collected from the streets and brothels of Constantinople*. The prudence of Theodora is celebrated by Justinian himself; and his laws are attributed to the sage counsels of his wife. Her courage was displayed amidst the tumult of the people and the terrors of the court. Her chastity, from the moment of her union with Justinian, is founded on the silence of her implacable enemies; and some applause is due to the firmness of a mind which could sacrifice pleasure and habit to the stronger sense either of duty or interest. The wishes and prayers of Theodora could never obtain the blessing of a lawful son, and she buried an infant daughter, the sole offspring of her marriage. Notwithstanding this disappointment, her dominion was permanent and absolute; she preserved, by art or merit, the affections of Justinian; and their seeming dissensions were always fatal to the courtiers who believed them

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Her virtues,

* Compare the Anecdotes (c. 17) with the Edifices (l. i. c. 9)—how differently may the same fact be stated! John Malala (tom. ii. p. 174, 175) observes, that on this, or a similar occasion, she released and clothed the girls whom she had purchased from the stews at five aurei apiece.

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and death,
A. D. 548,
June 11.

The factions
of the cir-
cus.

to be sincere. Perhaps her health had been impaired by the licentiousness of her youth ; but it was always delicate, and she was directed by her physicians to use the Pythian warm baths. In this journey, the empress was followed by the prætorian præfect, the great treasurer, several counts and patricians, and a splendid train of four thousand attendants : the highways were repaired at her approach ; a palace was erected for her reception ; and as she passed through Bithynia, she distributed liberal alms to the churches, the monasteries, and the hospitals, that they might implore Heaven for the restoration of her health*. At length, in the twenty-fourth year of her marriage, and the twenty-second of her reign, she was consumed by a cancer ; and the irreparable loss was deplored by her husband, who, in the room of a theatrical prostitute, might have selected the purest and most noble virgin of the East.

II. A material difference may be observed in the games of antiquity : the most eminent of the Greeks were actors, the Romans were merely spectators. The Olympic stadium was open to wealth, merit, and ambition ; and if the candidates could depend on their personal skill and activity, they might pursue the footsteps of Diomedes and Menelaus, and conduct their own horses in the rapid career†. Ten, twenty, forty chariots, were allowed to start at the same instant ; a crown of leaves was the reward of the victor ; and his fame, with that of his family and country, was chanted in lyric strains more durable than monuments of brass and marble. But a senator, or even a citizen, conscious of his dignity, would have blushed to expose his person or his horses in the

* See John Malala, tom. ii. p. 174. Theophanes, p. 158. Procopius de Edific. l. v. c. 3.

† Read and feel the xxiid book of the Iliad, a living picture of manners, passions, and the whole form and spirit of the chariot race. West's Dissertation on the Olympic Games (sect. xii—xvii.) affords much curious and authentic information.

circus of Rome. The games were exhibited at the expense of the republic, the magistrates, or the emperors: but the reins were abandoned to servile hands; and if the profits of a favourite charioteer sometimes exceeded those of an advocate, they must be considered as the effects of popular extravagance, and the high wages of a disgraceful profession. The race, in its first institution, was a simple contest of two chariots, whose drivers were distinguished by *white* and *red* liveries; two additional colours, a light *green*, and a *cærulean blue*, were afterwards introduced; and as the races were repeated twenty-five times, one hundred chariots contributed in the same day to the pomp of the circus. The four *factions* soon acquired a legal establishment, and a mysterious origin, and their fanciful colours were derived from the various appearances of nature in the four seasons of the year; the red dog-star of summer, the snows of winter, the deep shades of autumn, and the cheerful verdure of the spring. Another interpretation preferred the elements to the seasons, and the struggle of the green and blue was supposed to represent the conflict of the earth and sea. Their respective victories announced either a plentiful harvest or a prosperous navigation, and the hostility of the husbandmen and mariners was somewhat less absurd than the blind ardour of the Roman people, who devoted their lives and fortunes to the colour which they had espoused. Such folly was disdained and indulged by the wisest princes; but the names of Caligula, Nero, Vitellius, Verus, Commodus, Caracalla, and Elagabalus, were enrolled in the blue or green factions of the circus: they frequented their stables, applauded their favourites, chastised their antagonists, and deserved the esteem of the populace, by the natural or affected imitation of their manners. The bloody and tumultuous contest continued to disturb

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the public festivity, till the last age of the spectacles of Rome ; and Theodoric, from a motive of justice or affection, interposed his authority to protect the greens against the violence of a consul and a patrician, who were passionately addicted to the blue faction of the circus.

They dis-
tract Con-
stantinople
and the
East.

Constantinople adopted the follies, though not the virtues, of ancient Rome ; and the same factions which had agitated the circus raged with redoubled fury in the hippodrome. Under the reign of Anastasius, this popular frenzy was inflamed by religious zeal ; and the greens, who had treacherously concealed stones and daggers under baskets of fruit, massacred, at a solemn festival, three thousand of their blue adversaries. From the capital, this pestilence was diffused into the provinces and cities of the East, and the sportive distinction of two colours produced two strong and irreconcilable factions, which shook the foundations of a feeble government. The popular dissensions, founded on the most serious interest, or holy pretence, have scarcely equalled the obstinacy of this wanton discord, which invaded the peace of families, divided friends and brothers, and tempted the female sex, though seldom seen in the circus, to espouse the inclinations of their lovers, or to contradict the wishes of their husbands. Every law, either human or divine, was trampled under foot, and as long as the party was successful, its deluded followers appeared careless of private distress or public calamity. The licence, without the freedom, of democracy, was revived at Antioch and Constantinople, and the support of a faction became necessary to every candidate for civil or ecclesiastical honours. A secret attachment to the family of Anastasius was imputed to the greens ; the blues were zealously devoted to the cause of Justinian, and their grateful patron protected, above five years, the disorders of a

Justinian
favours the
blues.

faction, whose seasonable tumults overawed the palace, the senate, and the capitals of the East. Insolent with royal favour, the blues affected to strike terror by a peculiar and barbaric dress, the long hair of the Huns, their close sleeves and ample garments, a lofty step, and a sonorous voice. In the day they concealed their two-edged poniards, but in the night they boldly assembled in arms, and in numerous bands, prepared for every act of violence and rapine. Their adversaries of the green faction, or even inoffensive citizens, were stripped and often murdered by these nocturnal robbers, and it became dangerous to wear any gold buttons or girdles, or to appear at a late hour in the streets of a peaceful capital. A daring spirit, rising with impunity, proceeded to violate the safeguard of private houses; and fire was employed to facilitate the attack, or to conceal the crimes of these factious rioters. No place was safe or sacred from their depredations; to gratify either avarice or revenge, they profusely spilt the blood of the innocent; churches and altars were polluted by atrocious murders; and it was the boast of the assassins, that their dexterity could always inflict a mortal wound with a single stroke of their dagger. The dissolute youth of Constantinople adopted the blue livery of disorder; the laws were silent, and the bonds of society were relaxed; creditors were compelled to resign their obligations; judges to reverse their sentence; masters to enfranchise their slaves; and fathers to supply the extravagance of their children. The despair of the greens, who were persecuted by their enemies, and deserted by the magistrate, assumed the privilege of defence, perhaps of retaliation: but those who survived the combat were dragged to execution, and the unhappy fugitives escaping to woods and caverns, preyed without mercy

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on the society from whence they were expelled. Those ministers of justice who had courage to punish the crimes, and to brave the resentment of the blues, became the victims of their indiscreet zeal ; a præfect of Constantinople fled for refuge to the holy sepulchre, a count of the East was ignominiously whipped, and a governor of Cilicia was hanged, by the order of Theodora, on the tomb of two assassins whom he had condemned for the murder of his groom, and a daring attack upon his own life. An aspiring candidate may be tempted to build his greatness on the public confusion, but it is the interest as well as duty of a sovereign to maintain the authority of the laws. The first edict of Justinian, which was often repeated, and sometimes executed, announced his firm resolution to support the innocent, and to chastise the guilty of every denomination and *colour*. Yet the balance of justice was still inclined in favour of the blue faction, by the secret affection, the habits, and the fears of the emperor ; his equity, after an apparent struggle, submitted, without reluctance, to the implacable passions of Theodora, and the empress never forgot, or forgave, the injuries of the comedian. At the accession of the younger Justin, the proclamation of equal and rigorous justice indirectly condemned the partiality of the former reign. “ Ye blues, Justinian “ is no more ! ye greens, he is still alive !”

Sedition of
Constantinople,
surnamed
Nika,
A. D. 532.
January.

A sedition, which almost laid Constantinople in ashes, was excited by the mutual hatred and momentary reconciliation of the two factions. In the fifth year of his reign, Justinian celebrated the festival of the ides of January : the games were incessantly disturbed by the clamorous discontent of the greens ; till the twenty-second race, the emperor maintained his silent gravity ; at length, yielding to his impatience, he condescended to hold, in abrupt

sentences, and by the voice of a crier, the most singular dialogue that ever passed between a prince and his subjects. Their first complaints were respectful and modest ; they accused the subordinate ministers of oppression, and proclaimed their wishes for the long life and victory of the emperor. “ Be patient and attentive, ye insolent railers !” exclaimed Justinian ; “ be mute, ye Jews, Samaritans, and Manichæans !” The greens still attempted to awaken his compassion. “ We are poor, we are innocent, we are injured, we dare not pass through the streets : a general persecution is exercised against our name and colour. Let us die, O emperor ! but let us die by your command, and for your service !” But the repetition of partial and passionate invectives degraded, in their eyes, the majesty of the purple ; they renounced allegiance to the prince who refused justice to his people ; lamented that the father of Justinian had been born ; and branded his son with the opprobrious names of an homicide, an ass, and a perjured tyrant. “ Do you despise your lives ?” cried the indignant monarch : the blues rose with fury from their seats ; their hostile clamours thundered in the hippodrome ; and their adversaries, deserting the unequal contest, spread terror and despair through the streets of Constantinople. At this dangerous moment, seven notorious assassins of both factions, who had been condemned by the præfect, were carried round the city, and afterwards transported to the place of execution in the suburb of Pera. Four were immediately beheaded ; a fifth was hanged : but when the same punishment was inflicted on the remaining two, the rope broke, they fell alive to the ground, the populace applauded their escape, and the monks of St. Conon, issuing from the neighbouring convent, conveyed them in a boat

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to the sanctuary of the church. As one of these criminals was of the blue, and the other of the green livery, the two factions were equally provoked by the cruelty of their oppressor, or the ingratitude of their patron ; and a short truce was concluded till they had delivered their prisoners, and satisfied their revenge. The palace of the præfect, who withstood the seditious torrent, was instantly burnt, his officers and guards were massacred, the prisons were forced open, and freedom was restored to those who could only use it for the public destruction. A military force, which had been despatched to the aid of the civil magistrate, was fiercely encountered by an armed multitude, whose numbers and boldness continually increased ; and the Heruli, the wildest Barbarians in the service of the empire, overturned the priests and their relics, which, from a pious motive, had been rashly interposed to separate the bloody conflict. The tumult was exasperated by this sacrilege, the people fought with enthusiasm in the cause of God ; the women, from the roofs and windows, showered stones on the heads of the soldiers ; who darted firebrands against the houses ; and the various flames, which had been kindled by the hands of citizens and strangers, spread without control over the face of the city. The conflagration involved the cathedral of St. Sophia, the baths of Zeuxippus, a part of the palace, from the first entrance to the altar of Mars, and the long portico from the palace to the forum of Constantine ; a large hospital, with the sick patients, was consumed ; many churches and stately edifices were destroyed, and an immense treasure of gold and silver was either melted or lost. From such scenes of horror and distress, the wise and wealthy citizens escaped over the Bosphorus to the Asiatic side ; and during

five days Constantinople was abandoned to the factions, whose watch-word, ΝΙΚΑ, *vanquish!* has given CHAP.
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a name to this memorable sedition*.

As long as the factions were divided, the triumphant blues, and desponding greens, appeared to behold with the same indifference the disorders of the state. They agreed to censure the corrupt management of justice and the finance; and the two responsible ministers, the artful Tribonian, and the rapacious John of Cappadocia, were loudly arraigned as the authors of the public misery. The peaceful murmurs of the people would have been disregarded: they were heard with respect when the city was in flames; the quæstor, and the præfect, were instantly removed, and their offices were filled by two senators of blameless integrity. After this popular concession, Justinian proceeded to the hippodrome, to confess his own errors, and to accept the repentance of his grateful subjects; but they distrusted his assurances, though solemnly pronounced in the presence of the holy gospels; and the emperor, alarmed by their distrust, retreated with precipitation to the strong fortress of the palace. The obstinacy of the tumult was now imputed to a secret and ambitious conspiracy, and a suspicion was entertained, that the insurgents, more especially the green faction, had been supplied with arms and money by Hypatius and Pompey, two patricians, who could neither forget with honour, nor remember with safety, that they were the nephews of the emperor Anastasius. Capriciously trusted, disgraced, and pardoned, by the jealous levity of the monarch, they had appeared as loyal servants before the throne; and, during five

* The history of the *Nika* sedition is extracted from Marcellinus (in Chron.), Procopius (Persic. l. i. c. 26), John Malala (tom. ii. p. 213—218), Chron. Paschal. (p. 336—340), Theophanes (Chronograph. p. 154—158), and Zonaras (l. xiv. p. 61—63).

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days of the tumult, they were detained as important hostages ; till at length, the fears of Justinian prevailing over his prudence, he viewed the two brothers in the light of spies, perhaps of assassins, and sternly commanded them to depart from the palace. After a fruitless representation, that obedience might lead to involuntary treason, they retired to their houses, and in the morning of the sixth day Hypatius was surrounded and seized by the people, who, regardless of his virtuous resistance, and the tears of his wife, transported their favourite to the forum of Constantine, and instead of a diadem, placed a rich collar on his head. If the usurper, who afterwards pleaded the merit of his delay, had complied with the advice of his senate, and urged the fury of the multitude, their first irresistible effort might have oppressed or expelled his trembling competitor. The Byzantine palace enjoyed a free communication with the sea ; vessels lay ready at the garden stairs ; and a secret resolution was already formed, to convey the emperor with his family and treasures to a safe retreat, at some distance from the capital.

Firmness of
Theodora.

Justinian was lost, if the prostitute whom he raised from the theatre had not renounced the timidity, as well as the virtues, of her sex. In the midst of a council, where Belisarius was present, Theodora alone displayed the spirit of a hero ; and she alone, without apprehending his future hatred, could save the emperor from the imminent danger, and his unworthy fears. “ If flight,” said the consort of Justinian, “ were the only means of safety, yet I should disdain to fly. Death is the condition of our birth ; but they who have reigned should never survive the loss of dignity and dominion. I implore heaven, that I may never be seen, not a day, without my diadem and purple ; that I may no longer behold the light, when I cease to be saluted with the

“ name of queen. If you resolve, O Cæsar ! to fly, CHAP. XXXIII.
 “ you have treasures ; behold the sea, you have ships ;
 “ but tremble lest the desire of life should expose you
 “ to wretched exile and ignominious death. For
 “ my own part, I adhere to the maxim of antiquity,
 “ that the throne is a glorious sepulchre.” The
 firmness of a woman restored the courage to delibe-
 rate and act, and courage soon discovers the resources
 of the most desperate situation. It was an easy and
 a decisive measure to revive the animosity of the fac-
 tions ; the blue were astonished at their own guilt
 and folly, that a trifling injury should provoke them
 to conspire with their implacable enemies against a
 gracious and liberal benefactor ; they again pro-
 claimed the majesty of Justinian, and the greens,
 with their upstart emperor, were left alone in the
 hippodrome. The fidelity of the guards was doubt-
 ful ; but the military force of Justinian consisted in
 three thousand veterans, who had been trained to
 valour and discipline in the Persian and Illyrian
 wars. Under the command of Belisarius and Mun-
 dus, they silently marched in two divisions from the
 palace, forced their obscure way through narrow
 passages, expiring flames, and falling edifices, and
 burst open at the same moment the two opposite
 gates of the hippodrome. In this narrow space, the
 disorderly and affrighted crowd was incapable of re-
 sisting on either side a firm and regular attack ; the
 blues signalized the fury of their repentance ; and it
 is computed, that above thirty thousand persons were
 slain in the merciless and promiscuous carnage of the
 day. Hypatius was dragged from his throne, and
 conducted with his brother Pompey to the feet of
 the emperor : they implored his clemency ; but their
 crime was manifest, their innocence uncertain, and
 Justinian had been too much terrified to forgive.
 The next morning the two nephews of Anastasius,

The sedi-
tion is sup-
pressed.

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with eighteen *illustrious* accomplices, of patrician or consular rank, were privately executed by the soldiers ; their bodies were thrown into the sea, their palaces razed, and their fortunes confiscated. The hippodrome itself was condemned, during several years, to a mournful silence : with the restoration of the games, the same disorders revived : and the blue and green factions continued to afflict the reign of Justinian, and to disturb the tranquillity of the Eastern empire*.

Agriculture
and manu-
factures of
the Eastern
empire.

III. That empire, after Rome was barbarous, still embraced the nations whom she had conquered beyond the Hadriatic, and as far as the frontiers of Æthiopia and Persia. Justinian reigned over sixty-four provinces, and nine hundred and thirty-five cities ; his dominions were blessed by nature with the advantages of soil, situation, and climate : and the improvements of human art had been perpetually diffused along the coast of the Mediterranean and the banks of the Nile, from ancient Troy to the Egyptian Thebes. Abraham had been relieved by the well-known plenty of Egypt ; the same country, a small and populous tract, was still capable of exporting, each year, two hundred and sixty thousand quarters of wheat for the use of Constantinople ; and the capital of Justinian was supplied with the manufactures of Sidon, fifteen centuries after they had been celebrated in the poems of Homer. The annual powers of vegetation, instead of being exhausted by two thousand harvests, were renewed and invigorated by skilful husbandry, rich manure, and seasonable repose. The breed of domestic animals was infinitely multiplied. Plantations, buildings, and the instruments of labour and luxury, which are

* Marcollinus says in general terms, *innumeris populis in circo trucidatis*. Procopius numbers 30,000 victims : and the 35,000 of Theophanes are swelled to 40,000 by the more recent Zonaras. Such is the usual progress of exaggeration.

more durable than the term of human life, were accumulated by the care of successive generations. Tradition preserved, and experience simplified, the humble practice of the arts : society was enriched by the division of labour and the facility of exchange ; and every Roman was lodged, clothed, and subsisted, by the industry of a thousand hands. The invention of the loom and distaff has been piously ascribed to the gods. In every age, a variety of animal and vegetable productions, hair, skins, wool, flax, cotton, and at length *silk*, have been skilfully manufactured to hide or adorn the human body ; they were stained with an infusion of permanent colours ; and the pencil was successfully employed to improve the labours of the loom. In the choice of those colours which imitate the beauties of nature, the freedom of taste and fashion was indulged : but the deep purple which the Phœnicians extracted from a shell-fish was restrained to the sacred person and palace of the emperor ; and the penalties of treason were denounced against the ambitious subjects, who dared to usurp the prerogative of the throne.

I need not explain that *silk* is originally spun from the bowels of a caterpillar, and that it composes the golden tomb from whence a worm emerges in the form of a butterfly. Till the reign of Justinian, the silkworms who feed on the leaves of the white mulberry-tree were confined to China ; those of the pine, the oak, and the ash, were common in the forests both of Asia and Europe ; but as their education is more difficult, and their produce more uncertain, they were generally neglected, except in the little island of Ceos, near the coast of Attica. A thin gauze was procured from their webs, and this Cean manufacture, the invention of a woman, for female use, was long admired both in the East and at Rome. Whatever suspicions may be raised by the garments of the

The use of
silk by the
Romans.

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Medes and Assyrians, Virgil is the most ancient writer, who expressly mentions the soft wool which was combed from the trees of the Seres or Chinese*; and this natural error, less marvellous than the truth, was slowly corrected by the knowledge of a valuable insect, the first artificer of the luxury of nations. That rare and elegant luxury was censured in the reign of Tiberius, by the gravest of the Romans; and Pliny, in affected though forcible language, has condemned the thirst of gain, which explored the last confines of the earth, for the pernicious purpose of exposing to the public eye naked draperies and transparent matrons. The silks which had been closely woven in China were sometimes unravelled by the Phœnician women, and the precious materials were multiplied by a looser texture, and the intermixture of linen threads. Two hundred years after the age of Pliny, the use of pure or even of mixed silks was confined to the female sex, till the opulent citizens of Rome and the provinces were insensibly familiarized with the example of Elagabalus, the first who, by this effeminate habit, had sullied the dignity of an emperor and a man. Aurelian complained, that a pound of silk was sold at Rome for twelve ounces of gold: but the supply increased with the demand, and the price diminished with the supply. If accident or monopoly sometimes raised the value even above the standard of Aurelian, the manufacturers of Tyre and Berytus were sometimes compelled, by the operation of the same causes, to content themselves with a ninth part of that extravagant rate. A law was thought necessary to discriminate the dress of comedians from that of senators; and of

* *Georgic. ii. 121.* *Serica quando venerint in usum planissime non scio: suspicor tamen in Julii Cæsaris ævo, nam ante non invenio, says Justus Lipsius (Excursus i. ad Tacit. Annal. ii. 32).* See Dion Cassius (l. xliii. p. 358. edit. Reimar); and Pausanias (l. vi. p. 519), the first who describes, however strangely, the Seric insect.

the silk exported from its native country, the far greater part was consumed by the subjects of Justinian. They were still more intimately acquainted with a shell-fish of the Mediterranean, surnamed the silk-worm of the sea ; the fine wool or hair by which the mother-of-pearl affixes itself to the rock is now manufactured for curiosity rather than use ; and a robe obtained from the same singular materials was the gift of the Roman emperor to the satraps of Armenia.

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A valuable merchandize of small bulk is capable of defraying the expense of land carriage ; and the caravans traversed the whole latitude of Asia in two hundred and forty-three days from the Chinese ocean to the sea-coast of Syria. Silk was immediately delivered to the Romans by the Persian merchants, who frequented the fairs of Armenia and Nisibis : but this trade, which in the intervals of truce was oppressed by avarice and jealousy, was totally interrupted by the long wars of the rival monarchies. The great king might proudly number Sogdiana, and even *Serica*, among the provinces of his empire ; but his real dominion was bounded by the Oxus, and his useful intercourse with the Sogdoites, beyond the river, depended on the pleasure of their conquerors, the white Huns, and the Turks, who successively reigned over that industrious people. Yet the most savage dominion has not extirpated the seeds of agriculture and commerce, in a region which is celebrated as one of the four gardens of Asia ; the cities of Samarcand and Bochara are advantageously seated for the exchange of its various productions ; and their merchants purchased from the Chinese the raw or manufactured silk which they transported into Persia for the use of the Roman empire. In the vain capital of China, the Sogdian caravans were entertained as

Importation
from China
by land and
sea.

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XXXIII.

the suppliant embassies of tributary kingdoms, and if they returned in safety, the bold adventure was rewarded with exorbitant gain. But the difficult and perilous march from Samarcand to the first town of Shensi could not be performed in less than sixty, eighty, or one hundred days: as soon as they had passed the Jazartes, they entered the desert; and the wandering hordes, unless they are restrained by armies and garrisons, have always considered the citizen and the traveller as the objects of lawful rapine. To escape the Tartar robbers, and the tyrants of Persia, the silk caravans explored a more southern road; they traversed the mountains of Thibet, descended the streams of the Ganges or the Indus, and patiently expected, in the ports of Guzerat and Malabar, the annual fleets of the West. But the dangers of the desert were found less intolerable than toil, hunger, and the loss of time; the attempt was seldom renewed, and the only European who has passed that unfrequented way applauds his own diligence, that in nine months after his departure from Pekin he reached the mouth of the Indus. The ocean, however, was open to the free communication of mankind. From the great river to the tropic of Cancer, the provinces of China were subdued and civilized by the emperors of the North; they were filled about the time of the Christian æra with cities and men, mulberry-trees and their precious inhabitants; and if the Chinese, with the knowledge of the compass, had possessed the genius of the Greeks or Phœnicians, they might have spread their discoveries over the southern hemisphere. I am not qualified to examine, and I am not disposed to believe, their distant voyages to the Persian gulf, or the Cape of Good Hope: but their ancestors might equal the labours and success of the present race, and the

sphere of their navigation might extend from the isles of Japan to the straits of Malacca, the pillars, if we may apply that name, of an Oriental Hercules. Without losing sight of land, they might sail along the coast to the extreme promontory of Achin, which is annually visited by ten or twelve ships laden with the productions, the manufactures, and even the artificers, of China; the island of Sumatra and the opposite peninsula are faintly delineated as the regions of gold and silver; and the trading cities named in the geography of Ptolemy may indicate, that this wealth was not solely derived from the mines. The direct interval between Sumatra and Ceylon is about three hundred leagues; the Chinese and Indian navigators were conducted by the flight of birds and periodical winds, and the ocean might be securely traversed in square-built ships, which, instead of iron, were sewed together with the strong thread of the cocoa-nut. Ceylon, Serendib, or Taprobana, was divided between two hostile princes; one of whom possessed the mountains, the elephants, and the luminous carbuncle, and the other enjoyed the more solid riches of domestic industry, foreign trade, and the capacious harbour of Trinquemale, which received and dismissed the fleets of the East and West. In this hospitable isle, at an equal distance (as it was computed) from their respective countries, the silk merchants of China, who had collected in their voyages aloes, cloves, nutmeg, and santal wood, maintained a free and beneficial commerce with the inhabitants of the Persian gulf. The subjects of the great king exalted, without a rival, his power and magnificence; and the Roman, who confounded their vanity by comparing his paltry coin with a gold medal of the emperor Anastasius, had sailed to Ceylon in an Æthiopian ship, as a simple passenger.

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XXXIII.Introduc-
tion of
silk-worms
into Greece.

As silk became of indispensable use, the emperor Justinian saw, with concern, that the Persians had occupied by land and sea the monopoly of this important supply, and that the wealth of his subjects was continually drained by a nation of enemies. An active government would have restored the trade of Egypt and the navigation of the Red Sea, which had decayed with the prosperity of the empire; and the Roman vessels might have sailed, for the purchase of silk, to the ports of Ceylon, of Malacca, or even of China. Justinian embraced a more humble expedient, and solicited the aid of his Christian allies, the Æthiopians of Abyssinia, who had recently acquired the arts of navigation, the spirit of trade, and the sea-port of Adulis, still decorated with the trophies of a Grecian conqueror. Along the African coast, they penetrated to the equator in search of gold, emeralds, and aromatics; but they wisely declined an unequal competition, in which they must be always prevented by the vicinity of the Persians to the markets of India; and the emperor submitted to the disappointment, till his wishes were gratified by an unexpected event. The gospel had been preached to the Indians: a bishop already governed the Christians of St. Thomas on the pepper-coast of Malabar; a church was planted in Ceylon, and the missionaries pursued the footsteps of commerce to the extremities of Asia*. Two Persian monks had long resided in China, perhaps in the royal city of Nankin, the seat of a monarch addicted to foreign superstitions, and who actually received an embassy from the isle of Ceylon. Amidst their pious occupations, they viewed with a curious eye the common dress of the Chinese, the manufactures of silk, and the myriads of silk-worms, whose education (either

* See the Christian missions in India, in Cosmas (l. iii. p. 178, 179. l. xi. p. 337), and consult Asseman. *Bibliot. Orient.* (tom. iv. p. 413—548).

on trees or in houses) had once been considered as the labour of queens*. They soon discovered that it was impracticable to transport the short-lived insect, but that in the eggs a numerous progeny might be preserved and multiplied in a distant climate. Religion or interest had more power over the Persian monks than the love of their country; after a long journey, they arrived at Constantinople, imparted their project to the emperor, and were liberally encouraged by the gifts and promises of Justinian. To the historians of that prince, a campaign at the foot of mount Caucasus has seemed more deserving of a minute relation, than the labours of these missionaries of commerce, who again entered China, deceived a jealous people by concealing the eggs of the silk-worm in a hollow cane, and returned in triumph with the spoils of the East. Under their direction, the eggs were hatched at the proper season by the artificial heat of dung; the worms were fed with mulberry leaves; they lived and laboured in a foreign climate: a sufficient number of butterflies was saved to propagate the race, and trees were planted to supply the nourishment of the rising generations. Experience and reflection corrected the errors of a new attempt, and the Sogdoite ambassadors acknowledged, in the succeeding reign, that the Romans were not inferior to the natives of China in the education of the insects, and the manufactures of silk†, in which both China and Constantinople have been surpassed by the industry of modern Europe. I am not insensible of the benefits of elegant luxury; yet I reflect with

* The invention, manufacture, and general use of silk in China, may be seen in Duhalde (*Description Generale de la Chine*, tom. ii. p. 165. 205—223). The province of Chekian is the most renowned both for quantity and quality.

† Procopius, l. viii. Gothic. iv. c. 17. Theophanes, Byzant. apud Phot. Cod. lxxxiv. p. 38. Zonaras, tom. ii. l. xiv. p. 69. Pagi (tom. ii. p. 602) assigns to the year 552 this memorable importation. Menander (in Excerpt. Legat. p. 107) mentions the admiration of the Sogdoites; and Theophylact Simocatta (l. vii. c. 9) darkly represents the two rival kingdoms in (*China*) the country of silk.

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XXXIII.

some pain, that if the importers of silk had introduced the art of printing, already practised by the Chinese, the comedies of Menander and the entire decads of Livy would have been perpetuated in the editions of the sixth century.

State of the
revenue.

IV. The subjects of Justinian were dissatisfied with the times, and with the government. Europe was over-run by the Barbarians : the poverty of the West discouraged the trade and manufactures of the East : the produce of labour was consumed by the unprofitable servants of the state and the army ; and a rapid decrease was felt in the fixed and circulating capitals which constitute the national wealth. The public distress had been alleviated by the economy of Anastasius, and that prudent emperor accumulated an immense treasure while he delivered his people from the most odious or oppressive taxes. Their gratitude universally applauded the abolition of the *gold of affliction*, a personal tribute on the industry of the poor, but more intolerable, as it should seem, in the form than in the substance, since the flourishing city of Edessa paid only one hundred and forty pounds of gold, which was collected in four years from ten thousand artificers. Yet such was the parsimony which supported this liberal disposition, that, in a reign of twenty-seven years, Anastasius saved, from his annual revenue, the enormous sum of thirteen million sterling, or three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold. His example was neglected, and his treasure was abused, by the nephew of Justin. The riches of Justinian were speedily exhausted by alms and buildings, by ambitious wars, and ignominious treaties. His revenues were found inadequate to his expenses. Every art was tried to extort from the people the gold and silver which he scattered with a lavish hand from Persia to France ; his reign was marked by the vicissitudes, or rather by

Avarice and
profusion of
Justinian.

the combat, of rapaciousness and avarice, of splendour and poverty; he lived with the reputation of hidden treasures, and bequeathed to his successor the payment of his debts. Such a character has been justly accused by the voice of the people and of posterity: but public discontent is credulous; private malice is bold; and a lover of truth will peruse with a suspicious eye the instructive anecdotes of Procopius. The secret historian represents only the vices of Justinian, and those vices are darkened by his malevolent pencil. Ambiguous actions are imputed to the worst motives: error is confounded with guilt, accident with design, and laws with abuses: the partial injustice of a moment is dexterously applied as the general maxim of a reign of thirty-two years: the emperor alone is made responsible for the faults of his officers, the disorders of the times, and the corruption of his subjects; and even the calamities of nature, plagues, earthquakes, and inundations, are imputed to Justinian*.

After this precaution, I shall briefly relate the anecdotes of avarice and rapine, under the following heads: I. Justinian was so profuse that he could not be liberal. The civil and military officers, when they were admitted into the service of the palace, obtained a humble rank and a moderate stipend; they ascended by seniority to a station of affluence and repose; the annual pensions, of which the most honourable class was abolished by Justinian, amounted to four hundred thousand pounds; and this domestic economy was deplored by the venal or indigent courtiers as the last outrage on the majesty of the empire. The posts, the salaries of physicians, and the nocturnal illuminations, were objects of more general concern; and the cities might justly complain, that he usurped the

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* The Anecdotes (c. 11—14. 18. 20—30) supply many facts and more complaints.

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tances.

municipal revenues which had been appropriated to these useful institutions. Even the soldiers were injured ; and such was the decay of military spirit, that they were injured with impunity. The emperor refused, at the return of each fifth year, the customary donative of five pieces of gold, reduced his veterans to beg their bread, and suffered unpaid armies to melt away in the wars of Italy and Persia. II. The humanity of his predecessors had always remitted, in some auspicious circumstance of their reign, the arrears of the public tribute ; and they dexterously assumed the merit of resigning those claims which it was impracticable to enforce. “ Justinian, in the space “ of thirty-two years, has never granted a similar indulgence ; and many of his subjects have renounced “ the possession of those lands whose value is insufficient to satisfy the demands of the treasury. To “ the cities which had suffered by hostile inroads, “ Anastasius promised a general exemption of seven “ years : the provinces of Justinian have been ravaged “ by the Persians and Arabs, the Huns and Slavonians ; but his vain and ridiculous dispensation of “ a single year has been confined to those places “ which were actually taken by the enemy.” Such is the language of the secret historian, who expressly denies that *any* indulgence was granted to Palestine after the revolt of the Samaritans ; a false and odious charge, confuted by the authentic record, which attests a relief of thirteen centenaries of gold (fifty-two thousand pounds) obtained for that desolate province by the intercession of St. Sabas. III. Procopius has not condescended to explain the system of taxation, which fell like a hail-storm upon the land, like a devouring pestilence on its inhabitants ; but we should become the accomplices of his malignity, if we imputed to Justinian alone the ancient though rigorous principle, that a whole district should be condemned to sustain

the partial loss of the persons or property of individuals. The *Anona*, or supply of corn for the use of the army and capital, was a grievous and arbitrary exaction, which exceeded, perhaps in a tenfold proportion, the ability of the farmer; and his distress was aggravated by the partial injustice of weights and measures, and the expense and labour of distant carriage. In a time of scarcity, an extraordinary requisition was made to the adjacent provinces of Thrace, Bithynia, and Phrygia; but the proprietors, after a wearisome journey and a perilous navigation, received so inadequate a compensation, that they would have chosen the alternative of delivering both the corn and price at the doors of their granaries. These precautions might indicate a tender solicitude for the welfare of the capital; yet Constantinople did not escape the rapacious despotism of Justinian. Till his reign, the straits of the Bosphorus and Hellespont were open to the freedom of trade, and nothing was prohibited except the exportation of arms for the service of the Barbarians. At each of these gates of the city, a prætor was stationed, the minister of Imperial avarice; heavy customs were imposed on the vessels and their merchandize; the oppression was retaliated on the helpless consumer: the poor were afflicted by the artificial scarcity, and exorbitant price of the market; and a people, accustomed to depend on the liberality of their prince, might sometimes complain of the deficiency of water and bread. The *aerial* tribute, without a name, a law, or a definite object, was an annual gift of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, which the emperor accepted from his Prætorian præfect; and the means of payment were abandoned to the discretion of that powerful magistrate. IV. Even such a Monopolies. tax was less intolerable than the privilege of monopolies, which checked the fair competition of industry,

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and for the sake of a small and dishonest gain, imposed an arbitrary burthen on the wants and luxury of the subject. "As soon (I transcribe the anecdotes) as the exclusive sale of silk was usurped by the Imperial treasurer, a whole people, the manufacturers of Tyre and Berytus, was reduced to extreme misery, and either perished with hunger, or fled to the hostile dominions of Persia." A province might suffer by the decay of its manufactures, but in this example of silk, Procopius has partially overlooked the inestimable and lasting benefit which the empire received from the curiosity of Justinian. His addition of one-seventh to the ordinary price of copper-money may be interpreted with the same candour; and the alteration, which might be wise, appears to have been innocent; since he neither allayed the purity, nor enhanced the value, of the gold coin, the legal measure of public and private payments.

V. *Country.*

V. The ample jurisdiction required by the farmers of the revenue to accomplish their engagements might be placed in an odious light, as if they had purchased from the emperor the lives and fortunes of their fellow-citizens. And a more direct sale of honours and offices was transacted in the palace, with the permission, or at least with the connivance, of Justinian and Theodora. The claims of merit, even those of favour, were disregarded, and it was almost reasonable to expect, that the bold adventurer, who had undertaken the trade of a magistrate, should find a rich compensation for infamy, labour, danger, the debts which he had contracted, and the heavy interest which he paid. A sense of the disgrace and mischief of this venal practice at length awakened the slumbering virtue of Justinian; and he attempted, by the sanction of oaths and penalties, to guard the integrity of his government: but at the end of a year perjury, his rigorous edict was suspended, and

corruption licentiously abused her triumph over the impotence of the laws. VI. The testament of Eulalius, count of the domestics, declared the emperor his sole heir, on condition, however, that he should discharge his debts and legacies, allow to his three daughters a decent maintenance, and bestow each of them in marriage, with a portion of ten pounds of gold. But the splendid fortune of Eulalius had been consumed by fire; and the inventory of his goods did not exceed the trifling sum of five hundred and sixty-four pieces of gold. A similar instance, in Grecian history, admonished the emperor of the honourable part prescribed for his imitation. He checked the selfish murmurs of the treasury, applauded the confidence of his friend, discharged the legacies and debts, educated the three virgins under the eye of the empress Theodora, and doubled the marriage portion which had satisfied the tenderness of their father. The humanity of a prince is entitled to some praise; yet even in this act of virtue we may discover the inveterate custom of supplanting the legal or natural heirs, which Procopius imputes to the reign of Justinian. His charge is supported by eminent names and scandalous examples; neither widows nor orphans were spared; and the art of soliciting or extorting or supposing testaments, was beneficially practised by the agents of the palace. This base and mischievous tyranny invades the security of private life; and the monarch who has indulged an appetite for gain will soon be tempted to anticipate the moment of succession, to interpret wealth as an evidence of guilt, and to proceed, from the claim of inheritance, to the power of confiscation.

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Testaments.

Dishonour might be ultimately reflected on the character of Justinian; but much of the guilt, and still more of the profit, was intercepted by the ministers, who were seldom promoted for their virtues,

The ministers of Justinian.

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John of
Cappadocia.

and not always selected for their talents. The merits of Tribonian the quæstor will hereafter be weighed in the reformation of the Roman law ; but the economy of the East was subordinate to the Prætorian præfect, and Procopius has justified his anecdotes by the portrait which he exposes in his public history, of the notorious vices of John of Cappadocia. His knowledge was not borrowed from the schools, and his style was scarcely legible ; but he excelled in the powers of native genius, to suggest the wisest counsels, and to find expedients in the most desperate situations. The corruption of his heart was equal to the vigour of his understanding. Although he was suspected of magic and Pagan superstition, he appeared insensible to the fear of God or the reproaches of man ; and his aspiring fortune was raised on the death of thousands, the poverty of millions, the ruin of cities, and the desolation of provinces. From the dawn of light to the moment of dinner, he assiduously laboured to enrich his master and himself at the expense of the Roman world ; the remainder of the day was spent in sensual pleasures, and the silent hours of the night were interrupted by the perpetual dread of the justice of an assassin. His abilities recommended him to the lasting friendship of Justinian : the emperor yielded with reluctance to the fury of the people ; his victory was displayed by the immediate restoration of their enemy ; and they felt above ten years, under his oppressive administration, that he was stimulated by revenge, rather than instructed by misfortune. Their murmurs served only to fortify the resolution of Justinian ; but the præfect, in the insolence of favour, provoked the resentment of Theodora, disdained a power before which every knee was bent, and attempted to sow the seeds of discord between the emperor and his beloved consort. Even Theodora herself was constrained to dissemble, to wait a favourable

moment, and by an artful conspiracy to render John of Cappadocia the accomplice of his own destruction. At a time when Belisarius, unless he had been a hero, must have shown himself a rebel, his wife Antonina, who enjoyed the secret confidence of the empress, communicated his feigned discontent to Euphemia, the daughter of the præfect; the credulous virgin imparted to her father the dangerous project, and John, who might have known the value of oaths and promises, was tempted to accept a nocturnal, and almost treasonable, interview with the wife of Belisarius. An ambuscade of guards and eunuchs had been posted by the command of Theodora; they rushed with drawn swords to seize or punish the guilty minister: he was saved by the fidelity of his attendants; but instead of appealing to a gracious sovereign, who had privately warned him of his danger, he pusillanimously fled to the sanctuary of the church. The favourite of Justinian was sacrificed to conjugal tenderness or domestic tranquillity; the conversion of a præfect into a priest extinguished his ambitious hopes, but the friendship of the emperor alleviated his disgrace, and he retained in the mild exile of Cyzicus an ample portion of his riches. Such imperfect revenge could not satisfy the unrelenting hatred of Theodora; the murder of his old enemy, the bishop of Cyzicus, afforded a decent pretence; and John of Cappadocia, whose actions had deserved a thousand deaths, was at last condemned for a crime of which he was innocent. A great minister, who had been invested with the honours of consul and patrician, was ignominiously scourged like the vilest of malefactors; a tattered cloak was the sole remnant of his fortunes; he was transported in a bark to the place of his banishment at Antinopolis in Upper Egypt, and the præfect of the East begged his bread through the cities which had trembled at his name. During an exile of seven

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years, his life was protracted and threatened by the ingenious cruelty of Theodora ; and when her death permitted the emperor to recal a servant whom he had abandoned with regret, the ambition of John of Cappadocia was reduced to the humble duties of the sacerdotal profession. His successors convinced the subjects of Justinian, that the arts of oppression might still be improved by experience and industry ; the frauds of a Syrian banker were introduced into the administration of the finances ; and the example of the præfect was diligently copied by the quæstor, the public and private treasurer, the governors of provinces, and the principal magistrates of the Eastern empire.

His edifices
and archi-
tects.

V. The *edifices* of Justinian were cemented with the blood and treasure of his people ; but those stately structures appeared to announce the prosperity of the empire, and actually displayed the skill of their architects. Both the theory and practice of the arts which depend on mathematical science and mechanical power were cultivated under the patronage of the emperor ; and the fame of Archimedes was rivalled by Proclus and Anthemius. A tradition has prevailed, that the Roman fleet was reduced to ashes in the port of Syracuse by the burning-glasses of Archimedes ; and it is asserted that a similar expedient was employed by Proclus to destroy the Gothic vessels in the harbour of Constantinople, and to protect his benefactor Anastasius against the bold enterprise of Vitalian. A machine was fixed on the walls of the city, consisting of an hexagon mirror of polished brass, with many smaller and moveable polygons to receive and reflect the rays of the meridian sun ; and a consuming flame was darted, to the distance, perhaps, of two hundred feet. The truth of these two extraordinary facts is invalidated by the silence of the most authentic historians ; and the use of burning-glasses

was never adopted in the attack or defence of places. Yet the admirable experiments of a French philosopher have demonstrated the possibility of such a mirror; and, since it is possible, I am more disposed to attribute the art to the greatest mathematicians of antiquity, than to give the merit of the fiction to the idle fancy of a monk or a sophist. According to another story, Proclus applied sulphur to the destruction of the Gothic fleet; in a modern imagination, the name of sulphur is instantly connected with the suspicion of gunpowder, and that suspicion is propagated by the secret arts of his disciple Anthemius. A citizen of Tralles in Asia had five sons, who were all distinguished in their respective professions by merit and success. Olympius excelled in the knowledge and practice of the Roman jurisprudence. Dioscorus and Alexander became learned physicians; but the skill of the former was exercised for the benefit of his fellow citizens, while his more ambitious brothers acquired wealth and reputation at Rome. The fame of Metrodorus the grammarian, and of Anthemius the mathematician and architect, reached the ears of the emperor Justinian, who invited them to Constantinople; and while the one instructed the rising generation in the schools of eloquence, the other filled the capital and provinces with more lasting monuments of his art. In a trifling dispute relative to the walls or windows of their contiguous houses, he had been vanquished by the eloquence of his neighbour Zeno; but the orator was defeated in his turn by the master of mechanics, whose malicious, though harmless, stratagems are darkly represented by the ignorance of Agathias. In a lower room, Anthemius arranged several vessels or caldrons of water, each of them covered by the wide bottom of a leathern tube, which rose to a narrow top, and was artificially conveyed among the joists and rafters of the adjacent

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building. A fire was kindled beneath the caldron ; the steam of the boiling water ascended through the tubes ; the house was shaken by the efforts of imprisoned air, and its trembling inhabitants might wonder that the city was unconscious of the earthquake which they had felt. At another time, the friends of Zeno, as they sat at table, were dazzled by the intolerable light which flashed in their eyes from the reflecting mirrors of Anthemius ; they were astonished by the noise which he produced from a collision of certain minute and sonorous particles ; and the orator declared in tragic style to the senate, that a mere mortal must yield to the power of an antagonist, who shook the earth with the trident of Neptune, and imitated the thunder and lightning of Jove himself. The genius of Anthemius and his colleague Isidore the Milesian was excited and employed by a prince, whose taste for architecture had degenerated into a mischievous and costly passion. His favourite architects submitted their designs and difficulties to Justinian, and discreetly confessed how much their laborious meditations were surpassed by the intuitive knowledge of an emperor, whose views were always directed to the benefit of his people.

Foundation
of the
church of
St. Sophia.

The principal church, which was dedicated by the founder of Constantinople to Saint Sophia, had been twice destroyed by fire ; after the exile of John Chrysostom, and during the *Nika* of the blue and green factions. No sooner did the tumult subside, than the Christian populace deplored their sacrilegious rashness ; but they might have rejoiced in the calamity, had they foreseen the glory of the new temple, which at the end of forty days was strenuously undertaken by the piety of Justinian *. The ruins were cleared

* Grelot (*Voyage de C. P.* p. 95—164. Paris, 1680, in 4to.) has given plans, prospects, and inside views of St. Sophia ; and his plans, though on a smaller scale, appear more correct than those of Ducange. I have adopted and reduced

away, a more spacious plan was described, and as it required the consent of some proprietors of ground, they obtained the most exorbitant terms from the eager desires of the monarch. Anthemius formed the design, and his genius directed the hands of ten thousand workmen, whose payment in pieces of fine silver was never delayed beyond the evening. The emperor himself, clad in a linen tunic, surveyed each day their rapid progress, and encouraged their diligence by his familiarity, his zeal, and his rewards. The new cathedral of St. Sophia was consecrated by the patriarch, five years, eleven months, and ten days from the first foundation; and in the midst of the solemn festival, Justinian exclaimed, "Glory be to God, who hath thought me worthy to accomplish so great a work; I have vanquished thee, O Solomon!" But before twenty years had elapsed, an earthquake overthrew the eastern part of the dome. Its splendour was again restored by the perseverance of the same prince; and in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, Justinian celebrated the second dedication of a temple, which remains, after twelve centuries, a stately monument of his fame. The architecture of St. Sophia, which is now converted into the principal mosch, has been imitated by the Turkish sultans, and that venerable pile continues to excite the fond admiration of the Greeks, and the curiosity of European travellers. The eye of the spectator is disappointed by an irregular prospect of half-domes and shelving roofs: the western front, the principal approach, is destitute of simplicity and magnificence; and the scale of dimensions has been much surpassed by several of the Latin cathedrals. But the architect who first erected an *aerial* cupola is entitled to the praise

Description.

the measures of Grelot: but as no Christian can now ascend the dome, the height is borrowed from Evagrius, compared with Gyllius, Greaves, and the Oriental Geographer.

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of bold design and skilful execution. The dome of St. Sophia, illuminated by four-and-twenty windows, is formed with so small a curve, that the depth is equal only to one-sixth of its diameter ; the measure of that diameter is one hundred and fifteen feet, and the lofty centre, where a crescent has supplanted the cross, rises to the perpendicular height of one hundred and eighty feet above the pavement. The circle which encompasses the dome lightly reposes on four strong arches, and their weight is firmly supported by four massy piles, whose strength is assisted on the northern and southern sides by four columns of Egyptian granite. A Greek cross, inscribed in a quadrangle, represents the form of the edifice ; the exact breadth is two hundred and forty-three feet, and two hundred and sixty-nine may be assigned for the extreme length from the sanctuary in the east to the nine western doors which open into the vestibule, and from thence into the *narthex* or exterior portico. That portico was the humble station of the penitents. The nave or body of the church was filled by the congregation of the faithful ; but the two sexes were prudently distinguished, and the upper and lower galleries were allotted for the more private devotion of the women. Beyond the northern and southern piles, a balustrade, terminated on either side by the thrones of the emperor and the patriarch, divided the nave from the choir ; and the space, as far as the steps of the altar, was occupied by the clergy and singers. The altar itself, a name which insensibly became familiar to Christian ears, was placed in the eastern recess, artificially built in the form of a demi-cylinder ; and this sanctuary communicated by several doors with the sacristy, the vestry, the baptistery, and the contiguous buildings, subservient either to the pomp of worship, or the private use of the ecclesiastical ministers. The memory of past calamities inspired Jus-

tinian with a wise resolution, that no wood, except for the doors, should be admitted into the new edifice; and the choice of the materials was applied to the strength, the lightness, or the splendour of the respective parts. The solid piles which sustained the cupola were composed of huge blocks of freestone, hewn into squares and triangles, fortified by circles of iron, and firmly cemented by the infusion of lead and quick lime: but the weight of the cupola was diminished by the levity of its substance, which consists either of pumice-stone that floats in the water, or of bricks from the isle of Rhodes, five times less ponderous than the ordinary sort. The whole frame of the edifice was constructed of brick; but those base materials were concealed by a crust of marble; and the inside of St. Sophia, the cupola, the two larger, and the six smaller, semi-domes, the walls, the hundred columns, and the pavement, delight even the eyes of Barbarians, with a rich and variegated picture. A poet, who beheld the primitive lustre of St. Sophia, enumerates the colours, the shades, and the spots of ten or twelve marbles, jaspers, and porphyries, which nature had profusely diversified, and which were blended and contrasted as it were by a skilful painter. The triumph of Christ was adorned with the last spoils of Paganism, but the greater part of these costly stones was extracted from the quarries of Asia Minor, the isles and continent of Greece, Egypt, Africa, and Gaul. Eight columns of porphyry, which Aurelian had placed in the temple of the sun, were offered by the piety of a Roman matron; eight others of green marble were presented by the ambitious zeal of the magistrates of Ephesus: both are admirable by their size and beauty, but every order of architecture disclaims their fantastic capitals. According to the sanctity of each object, the precious metals were distributed in thin leaves or in solid

Marbles.

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Riches.

Churches
and palaces.

masses. The balustrade of the choir, the capitals of the pillars, the ornaments of the doors and galleries, were of gilt bronze ; the spectator was dazzled by the glittering aspect of the cupola ; the sanctuary contained forty thousand pounds weight of silver ; and the holy vases and vestments of the altar were of the purest gold, enriched with inestimable gems. Before the structure of the church had risen two cubits above the ground, forty-five thousand two hundred pounds were already consumed ; and the whole expense amounted to three hundred and twenty thousand : each reader, according to the measure of his belief, may estimate their value either in gold or silver ; but the sum of one million sterling is the result of the lowest computation. A magnificent temple is a laudable monument of national taste and religion, and the enthusiast who entered the dome of St. Sophia might be tempted to suppose that it was the residence, or even the workmanship, of the Deity. Yet how dull is the artifice, how insignificant is the labour, if it be compared with the formation of the vilest insect that crawls upon the surface of the temple !

So minute a description of an edifice which time has respected may attest the truth, and excuse the relation of the innumerable works, both in the capital and provinces, which Justinian constructed on a smaller scale and less durable foundations. In Constantinople alone, and the adjacent suburbs, he dedicated twenty-five churches to the honour of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints : most of these churches were decorated with marble and gold ; and their various situation was skilfully chosen in a populous square, or a pleasant grove ; on the margin of the sea-shore, or on some lofty eminence which overlooked the continents of Europe and Asia. The church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople, and that of St. John at Ephesus, appear to have been

framed on the same model: their domes aspired to imitate the cupolas of St. Sophia; but the altar was more judiciously placed under the centre of the dome, at the junction of four stately porticoes, which more accurately expressed the figure of the Greek cross. The Virgin of Jerusalem might exult in the temple erected by her Imperial votary on a most ungrateful spot, which afforded neither ground nor materials to the architect. A level was formed, by raising part of a deep valley to the height of the mountain. The stones of a neighbouring quarry were hewn into regular forms; each block was fixed on a peculiar carriage drawn by forty of the strongest oxen, and the roads were widened for the passage of such enormous weights. Lebanon furnished her loftiest cedars for the timbers of the church; and the seasonable discovery of a vein of red marble supplied its beautiful columns, two of which, the supporters of the exterior portico, were esteemed the largest in the world. The pious munificence of the emperor was diffused over the Holy Land; and if reason should condemn the monasteries of both sexes which were built or restored by Justinian, yet charity must applaud the wells which he sunk, and the hospitals which he founded for the relief of the weary pilgrims. The schismatical temper of Egypt was ill entitled to the royal bounty; but in Syria and Africa some remedies were applied to the disasters of wars and earthquakes, and both Carthage and Antioch, emerging from their ruins, might revere the name of their gracious benefactor*. Almost every saint in the calendar acquired the honours of a temple: almost every city of the empire obtained the solid advantages of bridges, hospitals, and aqueducts; but the severe liberality of the monarch disdained to indulge his subjects in the po-

* Justinian once gave forty-five centenaries of gold (180,000*l.*) for the repairs of Antioch after the earthquake (John Malala, tom. ii. p. 146.—149).

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pular luxury of baths and theatres. While Justinian laboured for the public service, he was not unmindful of his own dignity and ease. The Byzantine palace, which had been damaged by the conflagration, was restored with new magnificence; and some notion may be conceived of the whole edifice, by the vestibule or hall, which, from the doors perhaps, or the roof, was surnamed *chalce*, or the brazen. The dome of a spacious quadrangle was supported by massy pillars; the pavement and walls were encrusted with many-coloured marbles—the emerald green of Laconia, the fiery red, and the white Phrygian stone intersected with veins of a sea-green hue: the mosaic paintings of the dome and sides represented the glories of the African and Italian triumphs. On the Asiatic shore of the Propontis, at a small distance to the east of Chalcedon, the costly palace and gardens of Heræum were prepared for the summer residence of Justinian, and more especially of Theodora. The poets of the age have celebrated the rare alliance of nature and art, the harmony of the nymphs of the groves, the fountains, and the waves; yet the crowd of attendants who followed the court complained of their inconvenient lodgings, and the nymphs were too often alarmed by the famous Porphyrio, a whale of ten cubits in breadth, and thirty in length, who was stranded at the mouth of the river Sangaris after he had infested more than half a century the seas of Constantinople.

Fortifica-
tions of
Europe.

The fortifications of Europe and Asia were multiplied by Justinian; but the repetition of those timid and fruitless precautions exposes to a philosophic eye the debility of the empire. From Belgrade to the Euxine, from the conflux of the Save to the mouth of the Danube, a chain of above fourscore fortified places was extended along the banks of the great river. Single watch-towers were changed into spacious

citadels ; vacant walls, which the engineers contracted or enlarged according to the nature of the ground, were filled with colonies or garrisons ; a strong fortress defended the ruins of Trajan's bridge, and several military stations affected to spread beyond the Danube the pride of the Roman name. But that name was divested of its terrors ; the Barbarians, in their annual inroads, passed, and contemptuously repassed, before these useless bulwarks ; and the inhabitants of the frontier, instead of reposing under the shadow of the general defence, were compelled to guard, with incessant vigilance, their separate habitations. The solitude of ancient cities was replenished ; the new foundations of Justinian acquired, perhaps too hastily, the epithets of impregnable and populous ; and the auspicious place of his own nativity attracted the grateful reverence of the vainest of princes. Under the name of *Justiniana prima*, the obscure village of Tauresium became the seat of an archbishop and a præfect, whose jurisdiction extended over seven warlike provinces of Illyricum ; and the corrupt appellation of *Giustendil* still indicates, about twenty miles to the south of Sophia, the residence of a Turkish sanjak. For the use of the emperor's countrymen, a cathedral, a palace, and an aqueduct, were speedily constructed ; the public and private edifices were adapted to the greatness of a royal city ; and the strength of the walls resisted, during the lifetime of Justinian, the unskilful assaults of the Huns and Sclavonians. Their progress was sometimes retarded, and their hopes of rapine were disappointed, by the innumerable castles, which, in the provinces of Dacia, Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace, appeared to cover the whole face of the country. Six hundred of these forts were built or repaired by the emperor : but it seems reasonable to

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believe that the far greater part consisted only of a stone or brick tower, in the midst of a square or circular area, which was surrounded by a wall and ditch, and afforded in a moment of danger some protection to the peasants and cattle of the neighbouring villages*. Yet these military works, which exhausted the public treasure, could not remove the just apprehensions of Justinian and his European subjects. The warm baths of Anchialus in Thrace were rendered as safe as they were salutary; but the rich pastures of Thessalonica were foraged by the Scythian cavalry; the delicious vale of Tempe, three hundred miles from the Danube, was continually alarmed by the sound of war†; and no unfortified spot, however distant or solitary, could securely enjoy the blessings of peace. The straits of Thermopylæ, which seemed to protect, but which had so often betrayed, the safety of Greece, were diligently strengthened by the labours of Justinian. From the edge of the sea-shore, through the forest and valleys, and as far as the summit of the Thessalian mountains, a strong wall was continued, which occupied every practicable entrance. Instead of a hasty crowd of peasants, a garrison of two thousand soldiers was stationed along the rampart; granaries of corn, and reservoirs of water, were provided for their use; and by a precaution that inspired the cowardice which it foresaw, convenient fortresses were erected for their retreat. The walls of Corinth, overthrown by an earthquake, and the mouldering bulwarks of Athens and Plataea, were carefully restored; the Barbarians were discouraged by

* These fortifications may be compared to the castles in Mingrelia (Chardin, *Voyages en Perse*, tom. i. p. 60. 131,)—a natural picture.

† The valley of Tempe is situate along the river Peneus, between the hills of Ossa and Olympus: it is only five miles long, and in some places no more than 120 feet in breadth. Its verdant beauties are elegantly described by Pliny (*Hist. Natur.* l. iv. 15), and more diffusely by Ælian (*Hist. Var.* l. iii. c. i.).

the prospect of successive and painful sieges ; and the naked cities of Peloponnesus were covered by the fortifications of the isthmus of Corinth. At the extremity of Europe, another peninsula, the Thracian Chersonesus, runs three days' journey into the sea, to form, with the adjacent shores of Asia, the straits of the Hellespont. The intervals between eleven populous towns were filled by lofty woods, fair pastures, and arable lands : and the isthmus, or thirty-seven stadia or furlongs, had been fortified by a Spartan general nine hundred years before the reign of Justinian. In an age of freedom and valour, the slightest rampart may prevent a surprise ; and Procopius appears insensible of the superiority of ancient times, while he praises the solid construction and double parapet of a wall, whose long arms stretched on either side into the sea ; but whose strength was deemed insufficient to guard the Chersonesus, if each city, and particularly Galipoli and Sestus, had not been secured by their peculiar fortifications. The *long* wall, as it was emphatically styled, was a work as disgraceful in the object, as it was respectable in the execution. The riches of a capital diffuse themselves over the neighbouring country, and the territory of Constantinople, a paradise of nature, was adorned with the luxurious gardens and villas of the senators and opulent citizens. But their wealth served only to attract the bold and rapacious Barbarians ; the noblest of the Romans, in the bosom of peaceful indolence, were led away into Scythian captivity, and their sovereign might view, from his palace, the hostile flames which were insolently spread to the gates of the Imperial city. At the distance only of forty miles, Anastasius was constrained to establish a last frontier ; his long wall, of sixty miles from the Propontis to the Euxine, proclaimed the impotence of his arms ; and as the danger became more imminent,

CHAP. new fortifications were added by the indefatigable
XXXIII. prudence of Justinian*.

Security of
Asia, after
the conquest
of Isauria.

Asia Minor, after the submission of the Isaurians, remained without enemies and without fortifications.

Those bold savages, who had disdained to be the subjects of Gallienus, persisted two hundred and thirty years in a life of independence and rapine. The most successful princes respected the strength of the mountains and the despair of the natives; their fierce spirit was sometimes soothed with gifts, and sometimes restrained by terror: and a military count, with three legions, fixed his permanent and ignominious station in the heart of the Roman provinces†. But no sooner was the vigilance of power relaxed or diverted, than the light-armed squadrons descended from the hills, and invaded the peaceful plenty of Asia. Although the Isaurians were not remarkable for stature or bravery, want rendered them bold, and experience made them skilful in the exercise of predatory war. They advanced with secrecy and speed to the attack of villages and defenceless towns; their flying parties have sometimes touched the Hellespont, the Euxine, and the gates of Tarsus, Antioch, or Damascus‡; and the spoil was lodged in their inaccessible mountains, before the Roman troops had received their orders, or the distant province had computed its loss. The guilt of rebellion and robbery excluded them from the rights of national enemies; and the magistrates were instructed by an edict, that the trial or punishment of an Isaurian, even on the festival of Easter, was a meritorious act of justice and piety. If the captives

* See the long wall in Evagrius (l. iv. c. 38). This whole article is drawn from the fourth book of the Edifices, except Anchialus (l. iii. c. 7).

† Trebellius Pollio, in Hist. August. p. 107, who lived under Diocletian, or Constantine. See likewise Pancirolus ad Not. Imp. Orient. c. 115. 141. See Cod. Theodos. l. ix. tit. 35. leg. 37. with a copious collective Annotation of Godefroy, tom. iii. p. 256, 257.

‡ See the full and wide extent of their inroads in Philostorgius (Hist. Eccles. l. xi. c. 8), with Godefroy's learned Dissertations.

were condemned to domestic slavery, they maintained, with their sword or dagger, the private quarrel of their masters ; and it was found expedient for the public tranquillity, to prohibit the service of such dangerous retainers. When their countryman Tarcalsæus or Zeno ascended the throne, he invited a faithful and formidable band of Isaurians, who insulted the court and city, and were rewarded by an annual tribute of five thousand pounds of gold. But the hopes of fortune depopulated the mountains, luxury enervated the hardiness of their minds and bodies, and in proportion as they mixed with mankind, they became less qualified for the enjoyment of poor and solitary freedom. After the death of Zeno, his successor Anastasius suppressed their pensions, exposed their persons to the revenge of the people, banished them from Constantinople, and prepared to sustain a war, which left only the alternative of victory or servitude. A brother of the last emperor usurped the title of Augustus, his cause was powerfully supported by the arms, the treasures, and the magazines, collected by Zeno ; and the native Isaurians must have formed the smallest portion of the hundred and fifty thousand Barbarians under his standard. Their disorderly numbers were vanquished in the plains of Phrygia by the valour and discipline of the Goths ; but a war of six years almost exhausted the courage of the emperor. The Isaurians retired to their mountains ; their fortresses were successively besieged and ruined ; their communication with the sea was intercepted ; the bravest of their leaders died in arms ; the surviving chiefs, before their execution, were dragged in chains through the hippodrome ; a colony of their youth was transplanted into Thrace, and the remnant of the people submitted to the Roman government. Yet some generations elapsed before their minds were reduced to the level of

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slavery. The populous villages of Mount Taurus were filled with horsemen and archers ; they resisted the imposition of tributes, but they recruited the armies of Justinian ; and his civil magistrates, the proconsul of Cappadocia, the count of Isauria, and the prætors of Lycaonia and Pisidia, were invested with military power to restrain the licentious practice of rapes and assassinations.

Fortifica-
tions of the
empire,
from the
Euxine to
the Persian
frontier.

If we extend our view from the tropic to the mouth of the Tanais, we may observe on one hand, the precautions of Justinian to curb the savages of Æthiopia, and on the other, the long walls which he constructed in Crimæa for the protection of his friendly Goths, a colony of three thousand shepherds and warriors. From that peninsula to Trebizond, the eastern curve of the Euxine was secured by forts, by alliance, or by religion ; and the possession of *Lazica*, the Colchos of ancient, the Mingrelia of modern, geography, soon became the object of an important war. Trebizond, in after-times the seat of a romantic empire, was indebted to the liberality of Justinian for a church, an aqueduct, and a castle, whose ditches are hewn in the solid rock. From that maritime city, a frontier-line of five hundred miles may be drawn to the fortress of Circesium, the last Roman station on the Euphrates. Above Trebizond immediately, and five days' journey to the south, the country rises into dark forests and craggy mountains, as savage though not so lofty as the Alps and the Pyrenees. In this rigorous climate, where the snows seldom melt, the fruits are tardy and tasteless, even honey is poisonous ; the most industrious tillage would be confined to some pleasant valleys ; and the pastoral tribes obtained a scanty sustenance from the flesh and milk of their cattle. The *Chalybians* derived their name and temper from the iron quality of the soil ; and, since the days of Cyrus, they might produce, under

the various appellations of Chaldæans and Zanians, an uninterrupted prescription of war and rapine. Under the reign of Justinian, they acknowledged the God and the emperor of the Romans, and seven fortresses were built in the most accessible passes, to exclude the ambition of the Persian monarch*. The principal source of the Euphrates descends from the Chalybian mountains, and seems to flow towards the west and the Euxine; bending to the south-west, the river passes under the walls of Satala and Melitene (which were restored by Justinian as the bulwarks of the lesser Armenia), and gradually approaches the Mediterranean sea; till at length, repelled by Mount Taurus†, the Euphrates inclines his long and flexible course to the south-east and the gulf of Persia. Among the Roman cities beyond the Euphrates, we distinguish two recent foundations, which were named from Theodosius, and the relics of the martyrs; and two capitals, Amida and Edessa, which are celebrated in the history of every age. Their strength was proportioned by Justinian to the danger of their situation. A ditch and palisade might be sufficient to resist the artless force of the cavalry of Scythia; but more elaborate works were required to sustain a regular siege against the arms and treasures of the great king. His skilful engineers understood the methods of conducting deep mines, and of raising platforms to the level of the rampart: he shook the strongest battlements with his military engines, and sometimes advanced to the assault with a line of moveable turrets on the backs of elephants. In the great cities of the East, the disadvantage of space, perhaps of position, was compensated by the zeal of the people, who seconded the garrison in the defence

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* Procopius, Persic. l. i. c. 15. De Edific. l. iii. c. 6.

† See the course of the Tigris and Euphrates, in the excellent treatise of d'Anville.

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of their country and religion ; and the fabulous promise, that Edessa should never be taken, filled the citizens with valiant confidence, and chilled the besiegers with doubt and dismay. The subordinate towns of Armenia and Mesopotamia were diligently strengthened, and the posts which appeared to have any command of ground or water were occupied by numerous forts, substantially built of stone, or more hastily erected with the obvious materials of earth and brick. The eye of Justinian investigated every spot ; and his cruel precautions might attract the war into some lonely vale, whose peaceful natives, connected by trade and marriage, were ignorant of national discord and the quarrels of princes. Westward of the Euphrates, a sandy desert extends above six hundred miles to the Red Sea. Nature had interposed a vacant solitude between the ambition of two rival empires : the Arabians, till Mahomet arose, were formidable only as robbers : and in the proud security of peace, the fortifications of Syria were neglected on the most vulnerable side.

Death of
Perozes,
king of
Persia,
A. D. 488.

But the national enmity, at least the effects of that enmity, had been suspended by a truce, which continued above fourscore years. An ambassador from the emperor Zeno accompanied the rash and unfortunate Perozes, in his expedition against the Nephthalites or white Huns, whose conquests had been stretched from the Caspian to the heart of India, whose throne was enriched with emeralds, and whose cavalry was supported by a line of two thousand elephants. The Persians were twice circumvented, in a situation which made valour useless and flight impossible ; and the double victory of the Huns was achieved by military stratagem. They dismissed their royal captive after he had submitted to adore the majesty of a Barbarian ; and the humiliation was poorly evaded by the casuistical subtlety of the Magi,

who instructed Perozes to direct his intention to the rising sun. The indignant successor of Cyrus forgot his danger and his gratitude; he renewed the attack with headstrong fury, and lost both his army and his life. The death of Perozes abandoned Persia to her foreign and domestic enemies; and twelve years of confusion elapsed before his son Cabades or Kobad could embrace any designs of ambition or revenge. The unkind parsimony of Anastasius was the motive or pretence of a Roman war*; the Huns and Arabs marched under the Persian standard, and the fortifications of Armenia and Mesopotamia were, at that time, in a ruinous or imperfect condition. The emperor returned his thanks to the governor and people of Martyropolis, for the prompt surrender of a city which could not be successfully defended, and the conflagration of Theodosiopolis might justify the conduct of their prudent neighbours. Amida sustained a long and destructive siege; and at the end of three months the loss of fifty thousand of the soldiers of Cabades was not balanced by any prospect of success. At length, in a silent night, they ascended the most accessible tower, which was guarded only by some monks, oppressed, after the duties of a festival, with sleep and wine. Scaling ladders were applied at the dawn of day; the presence of Cabades, his stern command, and his drawn sword, compelled the Persians to vanquish; and before it was sheathed, fourscore thousand of the inhabitants had expiated the blood of their companions. After the siege of Amida, the war continued three years, and the unhappy frontier tasted the full measure of its calamities. The gold of Anastasius was offered too late; the number of his troops was defeated by the

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The Persian war,
A.D. 502
—505.

* The Persian war, under the reigns of Anastasius and Justin, may be collected from Procopius (*Persic.* l. i. c. 7, 8, 9, (Theophanes (*in Chronograph.* p. 124—127), Evagrius (*l. iii. c. 37*), Marcellinus (*in Chron.* p. 47), and Josue Stylites (*apud Asseman. tom. i. p. 272—281*).

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tions of
Dara.

number of their generals ; the country was stripped of its inhabitants, and both the living and the dead were abandoned to the wild beasts of the desert. The resistance of Edessa, and the deficiency of spoil, inclined the mind of Cabades to peace ; he sold his conquests for an exorbitant price : and the same line, though marked with slaughter and devastation, still separated the two empires. To avert the repetition of the same evils, Anastasius resolved to found a new colony, so strong, that it should defy the power of the Persian ; so far advanced towards Assyria, that its stationary troops might defend the province by the menace or operation of offensive war. For this purpose, the town of Dara*, fourteen miles from Nisibis, and four days' journey from the Tigris, was peopled and adorned ; the hasty works of Anastasius were improved by the perseverance of Justinian ; and without insisting on places less important, the fortifications of Dara may represent the military architecture of the age. The city was surrounded with two walls, and the interval between them of fifty paces afforded a retreat to the cattle of the besieged. The inner wall was a monument of strength and beauty : it measured sixty feet from the ground, and the height of the towers was one hundred feet ; the loop-holes, from whence an enemy might be annoyed with missile weapons, were small, but numerous : the soldiers were planted along the rampart, under the shelter of double galleries ; and a third platform, spacious and secure, was raised on the summit of the towers. The exterior wall appears to have been less lofty, but more solid ; and each tower was protected by a quadrangular bulwark. A hard rocky soil resisted the tools of the miners, and on the south-

* The description of Dara is amply and correctly given by Procopius (*Persic.* l. i. c. 10. l. ii. c. 13. *De Edific.* l. ii. c. 1, 2, 3. l. iii. c. 5). See the situation in d'Anville (*l'Euphrate et le Tigre*, p. 53, 54, 55), though he seems to double the interval between Dara and Nisibis.

east, where the ground was more tractable, their approach was retarded by a new work, which advanced in the shape of a half-moon. The double and treble ditches were filled with a stream of water; and in the management of the river, the most skilful labour was employed to supply the inhabitants, to distress the besiegers, and to prevent the mischiefs of a natural or artificial inundation. Dara continued more than sixty years to fulfil the wishes of its founders, and to provoke the jealousy of the Persians, who incessantly complained, that this impregnable fortress had been constructed in manifest violation of the treaty of peace between the two empires.

Between the Euxine and the Caspian, the countries of Colchos, Iberia, and Albania, are intersected in every direction by the branches of Mount Caucasus; and the two principal *gates*, or passes, from north to south, have been frequently confounded in the geography both of the ancients and moderns. The name of *Caspian* or *Albanian gates* is properly applied to Derbend*, which occupies a short declivity between the mountains and the sea; the city, if we give credit to local tradition, had been founded by the Greeks; and this dangerous entrance was fortified by the kings of Persia, with a mole, double walls, and doors of iron. The *Iberian gates*† are formed by a narrow passage of six miles in Mount Caucasus, which opens from the northern side of Iberia or Georgia, into the plain that reaches to the Tanais and the Volga. A fortress, designed by Alexander perhaps, or one of his successors, to command that important

The Caspian
or Iberian
gates.

* For the city and pass of Derbend, see d'Herbelot (Bibliot. Orient. p. 157. 291. 307), Petite de la Croix (Hist. de Gengiscan, l. iv. c. 9), Histoire Genealogique des Tatars (tom. i. p. 120), Olearius (Voyage en Perse, p. 1039—1041), and Corneille le Bruyn (Voyages, tom. i. p. 146, 147): his view may be compared with the plan of Olearius, who judges the wall to be of shells and gravel hardened by time.

† Procopius, though with some confusion, always denominates them Caspian (Persic. l. i. c. 10). The pass is now styled Tatartopa, the Tartar-gates (d'Anville, Geographie Ancienne, tom. ii. p. 119, 120).

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pass, had descended by right of conquest or inheritance to a prince of the Huns, who offered it for a moderate price to the emperor : but while Anastasius paused, while he timorously computed the cost and the distance, a more vigilant rival interposed, and Cabades forcibly occupied the straits of Caucasus. The Albanian and Iberian gates excluded the horsemen of Scythia from the shortest and most practicable roads, and the whole front of the mountains was covered by the rampart of Gog and Magog, the long wall which has excited the curiosity of an Arabian caliph and a Russian conqueror*. According to a recent description, huge stones seven feet thick, twenty-one feet in length, or height, are artificially joined without iron or cement, to compose a wall, which runs above three hundred miles from the shores of Derbend, over the hills and through the valleys of Daghestan and Georgia. Without a vision, such a work might be undertaken by the policy of Cabades ; without a miracle, it might be accomplished by his son, so formidable to the Romans under the name of Chosroes ; so dear to the Orientals, under the appellation of Nushirwan. The Persian monarch held in his hand the keys both of peace and war ; but he stipulated, in every treaty, that Justinian should contribute to the expense of a common barrier, which equally protected the two empires from the inroads of the Scythians †.

VII. Justinian suppressed the schools of Athens and the consulship of Rome, which had given so many sages and heroes to mankind. Both these institutions had long since degenerated from their

* See a learned dissertation of Baier, *de muro Caucaseo*, in *Comment. Acad. Petropol. ann. 1726. tom. i. p. 425—463* ; but it is destitute of a map or plan. When the czar Peter I. became master of Derbend in the year 1722, the measure of the wall was found to be 3285 Russian *orgygia*, or fathoms, each of seven feet English ; in the whole somewhat more than four miles in length.

† See the fortifications and treaties of Chosroes or Nushirwan, in Procopius (*Persic. l. i. c. 16. 22. l. ii.*), and d'Herbelot (p. 682).

primitive glory; yet some reproach may be justly inflicted on the avarice and jealousy of a prince, by whose hand such venerable ruins were destroyed.

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Athens, after her Persian triumphs, adopted the philosophy of Ionia and the rhetoric of Sicily; and these studies became the patrimony of a city whose inhabitants, about thirty thousand males, condensed, within the period of a single life, the genius of age and millions. Our sense of the dignity of human nature is exalted by the simple recollection, that Isocrates* was the companion of Plato and Xenophon; that he assisted, perhaps with the historian Thucydides, at the first representations of the *Œdipus* of Sophocles and the *Iphigenia* of Euripides; and that his pupils *Æschines* and *Demosthenes* contended for the crown of patriotism in the presence of Aristotle, the master of *Theophrastus*, who taught at Athens with the founders of the Stoic and Epicurean sects†. The ingenuous youth of Attica enjoyed the benefits of their domestic education, which was communicated without envy to the rival cities. Two thousand disciples heard the lessons of *Theophrastus*‡; the schools of rhetoric must have been still more populous than those of philosophy; and a rapid succession of students diffused the fame of their teachers, as far as the utmost limits of the Grecian language and name. Those limits were enlarged by the victories of Alexander; the arts of Athens survived her freedom and dominion; and the Greek colonies which the Macedonians planted in Egypt,

The schools
of Athens.

* The life of Isocrates extends from Olymp. lxxxvi. 1. to ex. 3 (ante Christ. 436—338). See Dionys. Halicarn. tom. ii. p. 149, 150. edit. Hudson. Plutarch (sive anonymous), in Vit. X. Oratorem, p. 1538—1543. edit. H. Steph. Phot. cod. cclix. p. 1453.

† The schools of Athens are copiously though concisely represented in the *Fortuna Attica* of Meursius (c. viii. p. 59—73. in tom. i. Opp.). For the state and arts of the city, see the first book of Pausanias, and a small tract of Dicaearchus (in the second volume of Hudson's Geographers), who wrote about Olymp. cxvii. (Dodwell's Dissertat. sect. 4).

‡ Diogen. Laert. de Vit. Philosoph. l. v. segm. 37. p. 289.

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and scattered over Asia, undertook long and frequent pilgrimages to worship the Muses in their favourite temple on the banks of the Ilissus. The Latin conquerors respectfully listened to the instructions of their subjects and captives; the names of Cicero and Horace were enrolled in the schools of Athens; and after the perfect settlement of the Roman empire, the natives of Italy, of Africa, and of Britain, conversed in the groves of the academy with their fellow-students of the East. The studies of philosophy and eloquence are congenial to a popular state, which encourages the freedom of inquiry, and submits only to the force of persuasion. In the republics of Greece and Rome, the art of speaking was the powerful engine of patriotism or ambition; and the schools of rhetoric poured forth a colony of statesmen and legislators. When the liberty of public debate was suppressed, the orator, in the honourable profession of an advocate, might plead the cause of innocence and justice; he might abuse his talents in the more profitable trade of panegyric; and the same precepts continued to dictate the fanciful declamations of the sophist, and the chaster beauties of historical composition. The systems which professed to unfold the nature of God, of man, and of the universe, entertained the curiosity of the philosophic student; and according to the temper of his mind, he might doubt with the sceptics, or decide with the stoics, sublimely speculate with Plato, or severely argue with Aristotle. The pride of the adverse sects had fixed an unattainable term of moral happiness and perfection: but the race was glorious and salutary; the disciples of Zeno, and even those of Epicurus, were taught both to act and to suffer; and the death of Petronius was not less effectual than that of Seneca, to humble a tyrant by the discovery of his impotence. The light of science could not indeed be confined within the

walls of Athens. Her incomparable writers address themselves to the human race; the living masters emigrated to Italy and Asia; Berytus, in later times, was devoted to the study of the law; astronomy and physic were cultivated in the musæum of Alexandria; but the Attic schools of rhetoric and philosophy maintained their superior reputation from the Peloponnesian war to the reign of Justinian. Athens, though situate in a barren soil, possessed a pure air, a free navigation, and the monuments of ancient art. That sacred retirement was seldom disturbed by the business of trade or government; and the last of the Athenians were distinguished by their lively wit, the purity of their taste and language, their social manners, and some traces, at least in discourse, of the magnanimity of their fathers. In the suburbs of the city, the *academy* of the Platonists, the *lycæum* of the Peripatetics, the *portico* of the Stoics, and the *garden* of the Epicureans, were planted with trees and decorated with statues; and the philosophers delivered their instructions in spacious and pleasant walks, which, at different hours, were consecrated to the exercises of the mind and body. The genius of the founders still lived in those venerable seats; the ambition of succeeding to the masters of human reason excited a generous emulation; and the merit of the candidates was determined, on each vacancy, by the free voices of an enlightened people. The Athenian professors were paid by their disciples: according to their mutual wants and abilities, the price appears to have varied from a mina to a talent; and Isocrates himself, who derides the avarice of the sophists, required, in his school of rhetoric, about thirty pounds from each of his hundred pupils. The wages of industry are just and honourable, yet the same Isocrates shed tears at the first receipt of a stipend; the Stoic might blush when he was hired to preach

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the contempt of money ; and I should be sorry to discover, that Aristotle or Plato so far degenerated from the example of Socrates, as to exchange knowledge for gold. But some property of lands and houses was settled by the permission of the laws, and the legacies of deceased friends, on the philosophic chairs of Athens. Epicurus bequeathed to his disciples the gardens which he had purchased for eighty minæ, or two hundred and fifty pounds, with a fund sufficient for their frugal subsistence and monthly festivals* ; and the patrimony of Plato afforded an annual rent, which, in eight centuries, was gradually increased from three to one thousand pieces of gold †. The schools of Athens were protected by the wisest and most virtuous of the Roman princes. The library which Hadrian founded was placed in a portico adorned with pictures, statues, and a roof of alabaster, and supported by one hundred columns of Phrygian marble. The public salaries were assigned by the generous spirit of the Antonines ; and each professor, of politics, of rhetoric, of the Platonic, the Peripatetic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean philosophy, received an annual stipend of ten thousand drachmæ, or more than three hundred pounds sterling ‡. After the death of Marcus, these liberal donations, and the privileges attached to the *thrones* of science, were abolished and revived, diminished and enlarged : but some vestige of royal bounty may be found under the successors of Constantine ; and their arbitrary choice of an unworthy candidate

* See the testament of Epicurus in Diogen. Laert. l. x. segm. 16—20. p. 611, 612. A single epistle (ad Familiares, xiii. 1) displays the injustice of the Areopagus, the fidelity of the Epicureans, the dextrous politeness of Cicero, and the mixture of contempt and esteem with which the Roman senators considered the philosophy and philosophers of Greece.

† Damascus, in Vit. Isidor. apud Photium, cod. ccxlii. p. 1054.

‡ See Lucian (in Eunech. tom. ii. p. 350—359. edit. Reitz), Philostratus (in Vit. Sophist. l. ii. c. 2), and Dion Cassius, or Xiphilin (l. lxxi. p. 1195), with their editors, Du Soul, Olearius, and Reimar, and, above all, Salmasius (ad Hist. August. p. 72).

might tempt the philosophers of Athens to regret the days of independence and poverty. It is remarkable, that the impartial favour of the Antonines was bestowed on the four adverse sects of philosophy, which they considered as equally useful, or at least as equally innocent. Socrates had formerly been the glory and the reproach of his country; and the first lessons of Epicurus so strangely scandalized the pious ears of the Athenians, that by his exile, and that of his antagonists, they silenced all vain disputes concerning the nature of the gods. But in the ensuing year they recalled the hasty decree, and restored the liberty of the schools.

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The Gothic arms were less fatal to the schools of Athens than the establishment of a new religion. The surviving sect of the Platonists, whom Plato would have blushed to acknowledge, extravagantly mingled a sublime theory with the practice of superstition and magic; and as they remained alone in the midst of a Christian world, they indulged a secret rancour against the government of the church and state; whose severity was still suspended over their heads. About a century after the reign of Julian, Proclus was permitted to teach in the philosophic chair of the academy; and such was his industry that he frequently, in the same day, pronounced five lessons, and composed seven hundred lines. His sagacious mind explored the deepest questions of morals and metaphysics, and he ventured to urge eighteen arguments against the Christian doctrine of the creation of the world. But in the intervals of study, he *personally* conversed with Pan, Æsculapius, and Minerva, in whose mysteries he was secretly initiated, and whose prostrate statues he adored; in the devout persuasion that the philosopher, who is a citizen of the universe, should be the priest of its various deities. An eclipse of the sun announced his approaching

They are
suppressed
by Jus-
tinian.

Proclus.

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cessors,
A. D. 485
—529.

end; and his life, with that of his scholar Isidore, compiled by two of their most learned disciples, exhibits a deplorable picture of the second childhood of human reason. Yet the golden chain, as it was fondly styled, of the Platonic succession, continued forty-four years from the death of Proclus to the edict of Justinian *, which imposed a perpetual silence on the schools of Athens, and excited the grief and indignation of the few remaining votaries of Grecian science and superstition. Seven friends and philosophers, Diogenes and Hermias, Eulalius and Priscian, Damascius, Isidore, and Simplicius, who dissented from the religion of their sovereign, embraced the resolution of seeking in a foreign land the freedom which was denied in their native country. They had heard, and they credulously believed, that the republic of Plato was realized in the despotic government of Persia, and that a patriot king reigned over the happiest and most virtuous of nations. They were soon astonished by the natural discovery, that Persia resembled the other countries of the globe; that Chosroes, who affected the name of a philosopher, was vain, cruel, and ambitious; that bigotry, and a spirit of intolerance, prevailed among the Magi; that the nobles were haughty, the courtiers servile, and the magistrates unjust; that the guilty sometimes escaped, and that the innocent were often oppressed. The disappointment of the philosophers was expressed by a precipitate return, and they loudly declared that they had rather die on the borders of the empire, than enjoy the wealth and favour of the Barbarian. From this journey, however, they derived a benefit which reflects the purest lustre on the character of Chosroes. He required, that the seven sages who

* The suppression of the schools of Athens is recorded by John Malala (tom. iii. p. 187, sur Decio Cos. Sol.), and an anonymous Chronicle in the Vatican library (apud Aleman. p. 106).

had visited the court of Persia should be exempted from the penal laws which Justinian enacted against his Pagan subjects; and this privilege, expressly stipulated in a treaty of peace, was guarded by the vigilance of a powerful mediator. Simplicius and his companions ended their lives in peace and obscurity; and as they left no disciples, they terminate the long list of Grecian philosophers, who may be justly praised, notwithstanding their defects. The writings of Simplicius are now extant. His physical and metaphysical commentaries on Aristotle have passed away with the fashion of the times; but his moral interpretation of Epictetus is preserved in the library of nations, as a classic book, most excellently adapted to direct the will, to purify the heart, and to confirm the understanding, by a just confidence in the nature both of God and man.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

The last of
the philo-
sophers.

About the same time that Pythagoras first invented the appellation of philosopher, liberty and the consulship were founded at Rome by the elder Brutus. The revolutions of the consular office, which may be viewed in the successive lights of a substance, a shadow, and a name, have been occasionally mentioned in the present history. The first magistrates of the republic had been chosen by the people, to exercise, in the senate and in the camp, the powers of peace and war, which were afterwards translated to the emperors. But the tradition of ancient dignity was long revered by the Romans and Barbarians. A Gothic historian applauds the consulship of Theodoric as the height of all temporal glory and greatness; the king of Italy himself congratulates those annual favourites of fortune, who, without the cares, enjoyed the splendour of the throne; and at the end of a thousand years, two consuls were created by the sovereigns of Rome and Constantinople, for the sole purpose of giving a date to the year, and a festival to the people. But

The Ro-
man consul-
ship ex-
tinguished
by Justi-
nian,
A. D. 541.

CHAP.
XXXIII.

the expenses of this festival, in which the wealthy and the vain aspired to surpass their predecessors, insensibly arose to the enormous sum of fourscore thousand pounds; the wisest senators declined an useless honour, which involved the certain ruin of their families; and to this reluctance I should impute the frequent chasms in the last age of the consular *Fasti*. The predecessors of Justinian had assisted from the public treasures the dignity of the less opulent candidates; the avarice of that prince preferred the cheaper and more convenient method of advice and regulation. Seven *processions* or spectacles were the number to which his edict confined the horse and chariot races, the athletic sports, the music, and pantomimes of the theatre, and the hunting of wild beasts; and small pieces of silver were discreetly substituted to the gold medals, which had always excited tumult and drunkenness, when they were scattered with a profuse hand among the populace. Notwithstanding these precautions, and his own example, the succession of consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom*. Yet the annual consulship still lived in the minds of the people: they fondly expected its speedy restoration; they applauded the gracious condescension of successive princes, by whom it was assumed in the first year of their reign; and three centuries elapsed, after the death of Justinian, before that obsolete dignity, which had been suppressed by custom, could be abolished by law†. The imperfect mode of di-

* Procopius, in Anecd. c. 26. Aleman. p. 106. In the xviiiith year after the consulship of Basilius, according to the reckoning of Marcellinus, Victor, Marius, &c. the secret history was composed, and, in the eyes of Procopius, the consulship was finally abolished.

† By Leo the philosopher (Novell. xciv. A. D. 886—911). See Pagi (Dissertat. Hypatica, p. 325—362.) and Ducange (Gloss. Græc. p. 1635, 1636).

stinguishing each year by the name of a magistrate was usually supplied by the date of a permanent æra : CHAP. XXXIII. the creation of the world, according to the septuagint version, was adopted by the Greeks ; and the Latins, since the age of Charlemagne, have computed their time from the birth of Christ.

Even the title was vilified; *consulatus codicilli...vilescunt*, says the emperor himself.

END OF VOL. III.

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